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THE TANJORE MAHARAJAH SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

INESILLA,

AND

OTHER TALES.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

INESILLA,

OR

THE TEMPTER,

A ROMANCE;

WITH OTHER TALES.

BY

CHARLES OLLIER,

AUTHOR OF "ALTHAM AND HIS WIFE."

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1824

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
592

TO

CHANDOS LEIGH, Esq.

OF STONELEIGH ABBEY,

&c. &c.

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED,

IN HUMBLE TESTIMONY OF MY ADMIRATION OF HIS WRITINGS, AND RESPECT FOR HIS VIRTUES.

C. O.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.
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A24

ADVERTISEMENT.

The longest of the stories in this Volume has been some time announced; but it was little more than half written, when the unexpected death of my eldest child, (a grief, the depth of which cannot even be guessed by those who have not suffered it,) indisposed me to, if not disqualified me for, mental exertion. The tale has lately been resumed and finished.

Two of the succeeding stories, "The Convict," and "The Disinterment," have already appeared in a periodical work: in the present impression they have undergone some alterations. "The Jilt" is now first printed.

I ought not to omit mentioning that the beautiful little serenade, in the first chapter of "Inesilla," was kindly written for me by the gentleman who has so often delighted the lovers of poetry under the assumed name of BARRY CORNWALL.

C. O.

Dec. 1823.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

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INESILLA,

OR

THE TEMPTER.

O singular sweetness naturally living in fair feminine blood! If I had praises answerable to thy great and glorious deservings, my voice should never faint, nor my pen wax weary.

BOCCACCIO.—*Old Transl.*

INESILLA

CHAPTER I

> Beneath a row
> Of lemon-trees, which there did proudly grow,
> And with bright stores of golden fruit repay
> The light they drank from the sun's neighbouring ray,
> (A small but artful Paradise) they walked.
>
> Cowley's Davideis.

Inesilla de Zavaleta was a young Spanish girl living in a village near one of the towns in the pleasant province of Valencia. The country for many miles round her dwelling was like an extensive and odorous grove of cedars, olive, orange, mulberry, and almond trees, with open patches here and there of delicate herbage; and she was a fit resident for such a place, being beautiful even to luxury. Her father and mother were persons of some

rank, and had moved, as the phrase is, very conspicuously in the world; but now age was creeping upon them both, and sickness had so enfeebled the latter, that she could not deliver herself from the frequent assaults of tremors and vague apprehensions, which would come without cause: a sad and remediless state! They had therefore given up their visits and their gaieties; and hence was occasioned a defect in poor Inesilla's character, or rather a quality which the world in general calls a defect. It was not that she was imperfectly educated, or ungentle, or inelegant; for her information was good for one so young, and her manners were ripe in female tenderness and grace; but as she had been kept apart from the world and its customs, her character, if I may so express myself, was not put in livery; she resembled, to a certain degree, the nymphs in the chorus of Tasso's Amyntas:

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shame had not been taught her, and out of the clearness of her innocence her sentiments came undisguised.

Had she lived in the closeness of a town, the constant sight of her mother's moodiness might have operated to the utter depression of her young spirits; but the wide sky and the free air are glorious neutralizers of the contagion of melancholy. Nature is a joyful acquaintance. Inesilla was born in its lap; and though she had not the exquisite pleasure of one who for years has been made to feel the contrast of cities, and who returning to the open country with his soul thirsting for its freshness, expatiates and analyzes and doats upon all he sees, yet still, with a placid and scarcely conscious feeling, she loved the familiar trees and blue distant mountains.

A girl of this sort (and a Valencian too) it will easily be imagined, could not arrive at

the age of seventeen years and have no love-affair on her hands. Inesilla had already gone through the preliminaries of an engagement for life. She had first of all attracted the observation of her lover, as I have been told, by the beauty of her gait ("an excellent thing in woman") as she paraded with her mother during a sunny shower under one of the church-porticos in the neighbouring town; the gallant hovered about her at a little distance till she reached home; he afterwards contrived to get acquainted with her,—courted, and won her: and the love thus kindled between them was of no common or calculating nature; it was vigorous and delicious, and at times so suddenly intense, as to appear to their young hearts for a moment or so with almost an awful character.

Leandro de Bonadilla, whose fortunes were thus identified with Inesilla's, was of a noble

family. He had seen something of life in general, and more of its dissipations; and hence a temperament, naturally sanguine, was made impatient and excessive. His young blood flowed healthily through his veins; he revelled in the strength and in the enjoyments of his life; nothing was indifferent or tasteless to him: the beauties of nature or of art, temperance or indulgence, activity or idleness, jollity or seriousness, all had a certain relish; and the pleasure he drew from all was indicated expressively in his brown and almost swarthy countenance.

Our young lovers were constantly in each other's minds. Leandro, after the fashion of the country, used frequently to serenade his mistress at the turn of dawn, wishing to draw her from her sleep with his melodies; but he little knew that she was generally awake thinking of him before his arrival, and that she could with

her nice ear detect the sound of his first careful rustle through the leaves under her chamber window, and catch the vibration of the faint chord he struck to himself when he tuned his guitar to begin. Leandro was earnestly in love; and having therefore fancies in abundance, Inesilla was saluted on every occasion with new verses. The following has since their days become a favourite in Valencia. One may imagine the scene of these love-lorn importunities: a garden with high cedar and almond-trees looking drowsy and massed in the early twilight; a Spanish house with an old irregular front, in one of whose shadowy recesses would the balcony of the lady's room be nested, and on a lawn beneath the gallant standing with his guitar and upward-directed eyes:

SERENADE.

Inesilla! I am here:
Thy own cavalier
Is now beneath thy lattice playing:
Why art thou delaying?

He hath ridden many a mile
But to see thy smile:
The young light on the flowers is shining,
Yet he is repining.

What to him is a summer star
If his love 's afar?
What to him the flower's perfuming,
When his heart 's consuming?

Sweetest girl! why dost thou hide?
Beauty may abide
Even before the eye of morning
And want no adorning.

Now, upon their paths of light,
Starry spirits bright
To catch thy brighter glance are staying:
Why art thou delaying?

As Leandro's suit advanced he used to come more openly than this, and breakfast in the fresh

morning with his mistress and her family in the garden of their villa, which was about four miles distant from the town in which he dwelt. He was expected one day in particular; and Inesilla was up with the dawn to superintend the breakfast arrangements under the orange-trees. One can never be tired of contemplating such earthly felicity. It must have been beautiful, for instance, to have seen her in the clear morning light with her lithe and round-turned figure, her black braided hair and earnest look, which had something eastern in it, run along the marble terrace at the back of her father's villa, and down a flight of steps to the spacious garden spread beneath, separating every here and there, as she descended, the slender branches of opposite trees, which had been swayed together by the heavy night-dew, and crossed the way.

The servants were soon called up:

"The cloth was laid
In the amber shade,"

and Inesilla had brought her guitar, and was proceeding to hang it out of harm's way on a branch, when Leandro arrived.

"Inesilla!" said he with his usual modulation of voice when he pronounced that name.

She heard the call; her hand dropped from its temporary concealment among the broad orange-leaves; she turned her head; there he was standing near her with extended arms, into whose circle she instantly flew.

After a few natural and innocent caresses, she looked up and said:

"I must not forget to tell you, Leandro, that our old village gardener, Diego, whom you, you know, are pleased to call my horticultural gallant, has brought me some plants of a kind I never saw before, and which he says are natives of Italy. Will you come down

the garden and see them and give them names for me? Your fancy is always better (I *must* say it) when we are alone, than when my father and mother are with us, and Beatrice with the great fan walking behind."

"Come then, Inesilla," said he "let us see the strangers."

And away they went down the garden in their gaiety and innocence, and were soon out of sight.

When they returned, the old folks were seated at the table.

"Dear father," said Inesilla, "who is it you have asked to breakfast with us this morning?"

The old man looked at her with a sort of expecting smile on his face, as though her question was a prelude to some piece of jocoseness which she would occasionally play off, so great was her sprightliness.

"I mean," said she, "what is the name of that youthful elder whom we have left walking at the bottom of the garden?"

"Go on, Inesilla," said her father; "finish your wit, and we will begin our coffee."

"Very well, very well," she replied; "I shall call him, and then you *must* introduce me;" and so saying she ran down one of the walks, Leandro following her.

"What *can* they be about?" exclaimed Don Andreas.

They soon came back; and Leandro with an expression of perplexity said:

"There is something very strange in this affair. Inesilla and I were walking in the garden this morning, and we were accosted by an old cavalier, who conversed with us in a strain of familiar gaiety and high spirits. We did not question him about his being in the grounds, for he looked like a man of conse-

quence, and we took it for granted you had invited him."

"You surprise me!" said Inesilla's father: "what kind of man was he?"

"As I have said," replied Leandro. "He had a reverend face, and at the same time great gaiety and elegance of deportment: a sort of Anacreon in a Spanish habit: but now that we have been to the place where we left him he is not to be found. I have even climbed the wall and looked into the empty space beyond, but can see nothing of him."

Our party now regarded each other with those looks of scrutiny which people give when something they have heard throws them on the brink of a painful conclusion, and they wish to see the impression it has made on their companions.

Inesilla's mother broke the silence: "There is a touch of mystery in this," said she; "it is

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certain that no person has been asked here; besides, where can he have disappeared? and see, it has made even Inesilla dumb and thoughtful."

Her father looked at her, and assuming a careless air, "there is nothing to alarm you, dear child," he said; "it is some foolish freak; we will think no more of it. Come, Senor Leandro, sit down."

The morning was one of unusual heat and brilliance of sunshine even for a Spanish climate; but our party were not annoyed by it, thanks to the ample tree under whose shade they sat enjoying their coffee.

The perplexity the stranger had thrown them into had now dispersed, and all seemed happy, excepting Inesilla's mother, who was observed to have changed countenance considerably. They enquired if she felt ill, but she said she did not; they therefore attributed her looks to

the green light which came through the leaves, and struck full on her face, which had not sufficient colour to qualify and carry it off. This conjecture satisfied them for a time; but when in addition to her paleness they saw in her gestures an expression of a painful pondering, and observed how fixed and silent she sat, their anxiety returned, and methods were attempted to rouse her into cheerfulness.

With this view the conversation took a lively turn, and Leandro in the boisterous spirit of youth played a care-defying tune on the guitar; but it was of no avail; for in the midst of the music, Donna Blanca, pressing her hands against her eyes, uttered a strange shriek and fell back in her chair.

CHAPTER II

And in her room unseemly sorrow sits,
With hollow brows and griesly countenance.
SPENSER.

THIS sudden paroxysm was more violent than any which the watchful family of Donna Blanca had ever before observed in her. She was conveyed to her chamber, where her husband and her daughter tried affectionately to soothe her startled mind. After a time her perturbation subsided, and she expressed a wish to see Leandro, who was accordingly sent for.

The room into which he was conducted was a large one in a removed part of the house; and he was somewhat startled at passing out of the gaudy daylight into sudden gloom, for

nearly every access of light to Donna Blanca's chamber had been just closed. The sudden contrast almost blinded him, and he stopped a moment. The poor lady, he was told, was in this room; but he heard nothing,—not even the sound of her breathing. The stillness was as deep as that of the tomb. In a short time, however, his eyes recovered their strength; he saw the outlines of the furniture hardening themselves, as it were, out of the duskiness; the quaint figures of the old tapestry now became darkly visible; and on advancing a few steps he beheld the melancholy one huddled together in her chair in one of the recesses.

"You sent for me, my dear madam," said Leandro; "I am here; command me in any way you please."

"Thank you, thank you," she answered, "sit down. I have requested the favour of seeing you, Senor Leandro, because under my

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circumstances there is much virtue in communing with youth and health. To talk of their afflictions is consolation to the afflicted. Not that I want for sympathy in my own family; no: my husband and my child are full of tenderness; but they are familiar with my griefs, and I am weary of telling the same persons the same tale, though to speak of it never fails to give me ease. You see how kindly they have left the room because they would not place any restraint upon what I might say to you, and they have confidence in the healthful freshness of your advice; for alas! I am a poor, weak, sad creature."

This exordium being over, she paused, as if considering in what manner to commence her subject. In a few minutes and with a sudden effort she said:

"I am haunted, Senor Leandro, with apparitions that come in the day-time, even in

the eye of the broad sun. Perhaps already you think me insane, and I wish I could think so too; for then there would be some consistency in my affliction: but *now* my mind is constantly exercising its functions and telling me that these things cannot be, and yet I see them and yet they trouble me. This is a severe discipline for me that am timid, and a woman; and one, also, whose life has passed without temptation to sin; at least my conscience is clear of any great offence. Sometimes, indeed, when these visitations are most fearful, I am driven to unusual speculations for the cause of such suffering, and am ready to believe in the doctrine of a prior state, and that I must in that have offended. You will tell me, I know, as my husband has done, that this is caused by ill health; but the reverse is the truth. I have been hunted by shadows into sickness,—it is not sickness that has brought them. It

may seem, my dear young friend, almost laughable to your undiseased perceptions, if I tell you that even now, and with your cheerful face before me, I durst not have my window-shutters unclosed, because I know that as the light came in I should see two marble figures stretched by my side like those which lie on monuments. If they were to go other appearances would take their place, and with such unreal things am I scared all day. Sometimes when only my child is with me, the room will seem full of company, all talking; but without energy,—slow, and measured, and monotonous, like the beatings of a pendulum; and it seems that what they say in answer to each other is all familiar and foreknown to me, and that I speak it to myself with them as they proceed: and just now the garden seemed a church, and the trees were like pillars standing at intervals along the aisle and branching

off for the support of the embossed roof. There was, I thought, a numerous congregation assembled; but they sat like dead things, hearing, but not marking the emphatic discourse of the preacher: not one person stirred, or seemed exercising any thought, save only one ghastly looking man,—a man with white and blind eye-balls, who rising ever and anon, pointed his lean arms at me. The contemplation of this still and apathetic place subdued my spirits, and the strange gesticulations of that blind man startled me and I screamed. This awful grievance would be less, if the shapes which haunt me were to assume characters of turbulence and terror, for then I should either have a desperate relief in madness, or with a strong effort free myself at once from such delusion; but I am visited with shadows which look like the guardians of perpetual sadness and silence."

Here she paused awhile, keeping her poor

eyes fixed, as for refuge, on Leandro's face, who scarcely knew how to address her, with such strange feelings had her language filled him. Just, however, as he was on the point of attempting some consolatory words, she resumed:

"That was a strange adventure you met with this morning, Senor Leandro. Surely my malady is not extending itself to you and Inesilla. Are you certain that he whom you saw was real? Did you touch him? I have thought much of it.. And yet why should he manifest himself to you two alone? Perhaps he came in forewarning of something to happen to you both; or rather," she continued in a more solemn tone, "why do I ask myself that question, when in connection with his appearance there lie in my room these monumental figures, heavy and white and cold?"

"Dear lady," said Leandro, "look confidently round and undeceive yourself; there is

nothing here of which you speak. The stranger whom we met with this morning was talkative and gay; and you may depend on it that a sad ghost would scorn to be connected with so effervescent a character. They are too consistent in their proceedings. A little resolution will dispel these gaunt delusions, which I assure you are frightened with the least shew of resistence. Come, dear lady, walk out in the glad air with me and Inesilla and your husband. I'll be your knight-errant, and will encounter any demon you chuse. We will have no more of these sad ideas: I know they are afflicting enough, nay even appalling at first sight,—but I tell you they are more cowardly than a morning vapour before the sun. You shall vanquish them I'll warrant; and that, too, without much struggling. A little stoutness of heart is enough,—a little exercise or a little study. Inesilla and I, you know, have just

began to learn botany. Suppose you act your young days over again, and become a student with us. Within the round of a healthful science, no such shadows as you describe dare appear. Come take my arm; let us go forth; and you must not be angry with me if I bring you home fatigued. What? you shake your head, and think you are not strong enough now. Well then it shall be deferred till to-morrow, but, in the mean time, would it not be better to open the shutters and get rid of this gloom?"

Leandro having said this, admitted the broad light into the room, and returned to Donna Blanca, who sat with fixed and vacant eyes, as though she was desperately subjecting herself to some torture, and yet dared not look to one side or the other for fear of seeing the instruments of it.

"Now, dear madam," said Leandro "with me by your side, take courage, look confidently

round, and be convinced how vain your idea was about those monumental figures of which you talked."

And she looked round with an uneasy countenance: but when her eyes reached a certain part of the room, her features became more embarrassed, and she said with a faint voice:

"It is there yet; but I will keep down the terrors that even now are fermenting within me, and try to stare it away."

"And I," said Leandro, advancing to the spot on which her eyes were fixed, "will assist your resolution, and invest the place with something living and familiar. I see it costs you a great effort; but the first struggle is the worst. Nay, do not shrink."

Alas! the endeavour was too great; her head dropped on her bosom—she raised it again, and then screamed out "Senor Leandro, for God's sake do not trifle with me! why do you

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stretch yourself along so with upward face, mocking the figures? keep your feet, I pray you; you assist my fears."

Leandro ran to her.

"Compose yourself, dear madam," he exclaimed. "I have not altered my posture in the least, nor would I do so on any account."

"Then I am growing worse," said she; "support me, I pray you,—I am very faint."

Leandro was alarmed; he reached to the bell; and Don Andreas and Inesilla flew to the care of the sufferer.

CHAPTER III

And firste I note as a thinge most noyous,
And unto youth a grevous maladie,
Amongis us callid love encombrous,
Vexyng alwny yonge peple straungèly,
Oftin by force it causith 'hem to dye;
And age is also turmentid by love.

CHAUCER.

LEANDRO returned homewards in the evening pondering much and painfully on that which he had seen. To what could be ascribed the state of mind in which he had left that unfortunate lady? Could it be traced to the early effect of a gloomy religious superstition which falls like a blight on many parts of Spain, and which the cheerful face of nature is not always able to diminish? or might it be referred to original bodily infirmity or mental weakness?

The first supposition was the most likely. Donna Blanca was born in one of the provinces bordering on Valencia, where priestcraft exercises an unrepressed and appalling power. Let my readers imagine a town twining with white houses round the irregular base of a woody mountain, and opening at every turn upon some fresh feature of a country which seems to rejoice in the eye of heaven with its trees and sun-tinted fruits and shining rivers, and then consider that in the town itself a voice of joy is never heard, unless it be occasionally that of some bird chirping from its nest under the broad cornice of a convent-wall,—that the amusements of music or theatres, or even of dancing, are things unknown,—that the inhabitants do not visit with each other, and that they make few or no excursions beyond the streets, but walk up and down them with pale and dreary faces, like

the dwellers in a valley in the deserts who have grown too numerous to subsist there, and who have no choice between gradual starvation and a frantic expedition across the immeasurable and dreadful sands. To be sure, the appearance of the priests may disturb this simile. They look contented enough, and have a sort of gloating expression of triumph, like so many vampires, over their pale crew.

In this very place Donna Blanca was brought up, and it is probable that this unnatural gloom may have given a tinge to her mind, which would manifest itself strongly when seconded by age.

Leandro's ruminations as he walked were broken by the voice of some one accosting him. He looked up, and his eyes encountered the smiling face of an old cavalier, whose thin white locks appeared quite handsome on the ruddiness of his face, which was streaked here

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and there with slight veins of a deeper colour. His limbs looked vigorously, and there was altogether a gallant bearing about him. It was the stranger who had so perplexed Inesilla and our hero in the morning.

"I owe you some explanation, Senor," said he to Leandro, "for my intrusion this morning on your private walk, because you know by this time that I was not invited there. One of my objects in coming and in entering into a conference with you, was to feast my eyes with the sight of that lovely creature, your mistress. I am glad to see that you do not look angry at this avowal of mine: it is a proof of your good sense; for what harm can happen to you from my being gratified in this manner? I am more than eighty years old; something too far advanced to compete with you for a fair lady, were I so inclined; though the sight of beauty is still charming to me.

Look upon me, Senor, and admire the life which has been able to preserve for eighty years so much health and lustihood. The grand conservator has been pleasure, which I have sought after with the elaborate and nice research of one pursuing a science; and so successful have I been, so dextrous in evading pain, or neutralizing it, or detecting it when unreal, (for pain if examined, will sometimes turn out to be mere artifice) that I am desirous to gain disciples among mankind, whose studies and ingenious processes strive with a ludicrous perversity after the creation of evil, of which it must be acknowledged they are plentiful manufacturers. I have for many years established a society among persons of rank, whose object is to unlearn the sorrowful prejudices of the world, accumulated through ages by knavery and sickness. These abjured, health of body and mind will follow, in whose

train comes happiness. The qualities of your mind, Senor Leandro, being known to me, I am anxious to enrol you among our numbers, (indeed this was one of my purposes in the interview I sought with you this morning) not doubting but that we shall find you ready in acquiring the principles of our science."

Our hero was as much surprised at this address as he had been at the bewildered and dolorous complaint of Inesilla's mother. Both had occurred to him within a few hours: the spectacle of hypochondriacism in its worst state, pressing down the soul with a leaden tyranny,—and its direct opposite, health in great age and freedom from care to an almost preternatural degree, avowedly obtained by rule and analysis. Leandro seemed to be a machine in a game at cross purposes, or a sort of shuttlecock thrown from one quarter to another with restless contrariety.

"Senor," said he to the ancient casuist, "you quite dazzle me with what you say about this mental alchemy which you have discovered. I must, with your leave, hear more of it, for I am at present rather surprised than informed; and since you have designed me (I know not why, nor indeed how I became known to you) for the honor of initiation in your principles and society, I crave for more particulars. Your eloquence is in itself a foretaste of what is to be derived from your rules."

"Why," replied the blithe sage, "the rudiments of our art are not many. In the first place we have nothing to do with the theories or creeds of the swarming monks who are found in all parts of Spain, sowing impossible dogmas in the minds of the people; the consequences of which are painful self-denials in an abundant world, ingenious multiplications

of guilt, growth of insincerity, confusion of truth and falsehood, diseased wanderings of the soul in dim and visionary mazes, bitter disputes on things which are not real, and an awful reverence of nonsense. We have indeed carefully examined into the nature of enthusiasms and passions of all kinds, and have found in them the prime causes of pain. Love, for instance, is against our canon laws. Any one of our members led or betrayed into it, we consider lost to himself and unfit for us. Love is the parent of jealousy, and care, and sympathy, and unrest, and of other nameless disquietudes; it is besides much given to monopoly, which cannot exist under the freedom of our order. I would not have you infer from this that we are indifferent to the sex; no: our retirement is adorned by dames of manifold beauties, as you shall see if you will visit us. As we can thus indemnify ourselves for the

absence of love, so our society, always complete and cheerful, prevents the necessity of that thing called friendship, which will not be content with its own good, till with a fastidious and prying eye it has ascertained the comfort of some other,—a coincidence rarely or never found in the blind and distracted world. You must not be startled at this bold rooting-out of plants which you may have considered of natural growth and sweet odour, but which I shall some of these days demonstrate to you are artificial things intruded by man into the innocent soil, and corrupting the atmosphere about them. Yes, Senor Leandro, we have shaken off all these clogging artifices, and have made for ourselves a world, and a state of being, full of freedom, health, beauty, enjoyment, and repose. Our house, which is within a few miles of this place, is situated in a grove of silver-shafted beeches on the side of a hill.

Through the innumerable trunks of these trees, more beautiful than corinthian pillars, are caught as you look in a level direction glimpses of the opposite uplands, and as your eye passes downwards by the lighted tops of the pines growing there one under another from amidst the matted underwood, you see into the deep valley with its lawny surface, turned occasionally by the sun into a yellow hue, except where the trees, which are scattered about in all shapes, throw down their trembling and green-restoring shadows. Nature constitutes our main delight. I would be understood comprehensively; for though we live thus apart from the general throng, and with pleasure for our sole aim and end, we are not idle. We pursue the studies connected with nature and the better knowledge of her works, such as botany, chemistry, astronomy, and others; and have made advances in them, and

obtained results, which if known by the prejudiced world, might get us persecuted for magicians. Now here I would point out to you the advantage of the moral philosophy by which we are governed. Inquiries into the sciences I have just named, are very seductive and are often continued so unremittingly, that the student loses the vigour of his body, while his mind, to use a familiar phrase, gets out of taste. The world to him has no refreshing variety; all is vanity. We have learnt better than this. Our studies, diligent as they are, have a prescribed time for their termination, and are succeeded by the sparkling talk of beautiful women: our banquet is spread in some vista of tall trees, and we dance afterwards under the coverture of their high and twinkling leaves fretted with sapphire light. But even this part of our life is not pursued to satiety; we preserve our relish for every thing by a

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wise husbandry, and a succession of various employments.—What think you, Senor Leandro, of our system? and when will you visit us and be satisfied of the truth of what I say?"

"Many thanks," replied Leandro, "for the eloquent description you have given me of your tenets and way of life; and notwithstanding your plan is so very original, I can already see that in many things it is also very wise. Why, Senor, your time must be passed in a triumphant style. I almost doubt whether any one educated in the errors of the world would have capacity for such large enjoyment. I, for instance, have so much of the leaven in me, that love and friendship seem necessary to my existence. The renouncement of these sentiments is the only part of your philosophy which I cannot find it in my soul to approve, though at the same time I confess it is probable that the course of your pleasures would

not flow on so calmly and uninterruptedly with them as without them. To my present mind, the anxieties and sympathies of love are hallowed things, refining and humanising the heart; while from the sacrifices made for friendship's sake, a man, methinks, rises with an increased sensation of his grandeur in the scale of being. These proscriptions come athwart my mind ungraciously, but I will not now dispute with you. We shall meet again (since you have so invited me) under the green roof of your own groves. I should tell you, though, that I am at present rather deeply involved in one of the prejudices you deprecate; and if you tempt me out of it, I am afraid you will have to debate with a stouter and more impatient casuist than I am."

"O," rejoined the stranger, "I understand you,—Senora Inesilla. I had strangely enough forgotten her. We must not expect, I see, to

have you among us permanently, as I had at first hoped; yet you will not object to visit us, as we are anxious to demonstrate the pleasure and reasonableness of our life, even to one of different opinions."

A day having accordingly been fixed for the visit, Leandro said:

"By the by, how did you manage to get away so dextrously this morning from Don Andreas's garden? Your unbidden appearance and quick exit alarmed Inesilla and the good old folks. Donna Blanca especially; who regarded the affair as a mysterious and untoward omen. I will not, indeed, undertake to say that it was not the cause of a frightful fit of hypochondriacism she had this morning, during which her senses staggered awfully even to the edge of madness. I myself cannot imagine how you contrived to elude our eyes so completely."

"There was no contrivance, Senor," answered our philosopher; "nor did I know till now that your eyes *were* eluded. I was not even aware that you did me so much honour as to look after me. I perceived I had made an impression on you; and thinking it probable I might meet you on your return home, my first purpose was gained, and I left the garden without any particular care as to the road of my departure. But what is it you tell me of Inesilla's mother? Terror and bewilderment of mind at an ordinary occurrence! Behold, Senor Leandro, an example of the melancholy errors of a common worldly education. Here is a woman racking her invention for means of self-torment, or rather betrayed into a state of mind which begets that wretched industry. Untoward omens too! I suppose she imagined a death-warrant was come to her husband, or that her daughter was to be

forcibly carried away by some awful unknown, or that you would result in a perjured lover. It is plain that the human heart is not fitted for the artificial anxieties consequent on what is called connexion and kindred. This woman's mind crumbles under them. She should have been of our society, where no exclusive connexions are formed, and where precautions are taken that we know not even our own children. Is it not a strange and wilful error to have your being split into several parts and yet retain only one in your own subjection?"

By this time the deepening yellow of the sunset admonished Leandro of his distance from home. He replied vaguely to the last words of his strange companion, — renewed his promise to visit him, and they parted. His homeward road circled, like a girdle, the steep sides of a mountain, about which the untamed and solitary landscape lay bathed in the rich

gold of the west, and seemed in its repose an example of the old man's doctrines. Leandro saw nothing of the trees in the valley beneath him except the broad spread of their topmost leaves, which, with the little air abroad, were heaving like surges of the solemn ocean under the silent farewell of the sun.

CHAPTER IV

——————— And now Antonio,
Now while the winds, grown mad with liberty,
Are tossing through the night, and with loud howl
Among the sleeping trees, shake them at once
Into grotesque and perilous sympathy,—
Sit we in light, wall-parted from the storm,
Within this antique room; and let us gaze,
Antonio, for such contrast is most sweet,
Upon that quiet picture. There the sun
Falls softened through green leaves, edging with gold
Those two embracing figures. The mild girl
With gracious womanhood and unreserve,
And innocent and fond confiding eyes,
Gives her full shape into her lover's arms.

Anon.

"Well! Leandro," said Inesilla, "this is the strangest man, and the strangest doctrine I ever heard of. I am glad you promised to go and visit the society this evening. It will be delightful to hear your description of their ceremonies and manners. You should not,

however, have told me about those handsome dames, for the idea of them might have conjured up my jealous supplications that you would not go. But I fear them not; for before you depart I shall give you a thousand kisses for want of better spells to bind you to me:" and having said this she declined her head on his shoulder, her hair falling forwards and hiding her face like a veil, while he cherished her with folded arms, and uttered not a word, fearful of breaking the delicious silence and intense enjoyment of that caress. At length he whispered:

"Your kisses, dearest one, will be all-powerful, and I will bring them back to you untainted by other lips. What happy hours we have had to day! I shall be but an unsatifactory reporter I fear, for my thoughts will dwell too much on you, and on this blessed morning. I shall scarcely note their hollow pleasures.

I wish I had not promised them my company. The idea of disturbing the continuity of this delicious day comes over me with melancholy reproaches: it has haunted me all the morning in the midst of our happy sauntering, and deepens as the hour of my saying 'good evening' comes on."

He paused; but soon, in a voice quivering with strong emotion, he cried out, "I will *not* go. My heart is full. Dear Inesilla!"

They were again locked together in a passionate embrace; their thoughts scattered and deprived of shape by the panting extacy of their hearts, even as a great wind will obliterate the light-poised clouds, taking them into his own gusty breath.

A sigh, a long-drawn happy sigh came after a time from Inesilla, and the tranced enchantment was at an end. She looked into her lover's face, and with a low-murmuring

voice, like the faint edge of a calm wave, which wanders, not breaks, among the pebbles, she said:

"I wish, too, dear Leandro, now that you speak and feel thus, that you were not going to leave me this evening; and yet I am desirous you should keep this appointment; for they will call you frivolous, and me a foolish girl, or a jealous mistress, and say I make you break your word, and *that* I know will annoy you. Go, therefore, and come and breakfast with us to-morrow; and you and I will afterwards stroll in the self-same quiet woods, and take the same books, and act over again the tranquil enjoyment of to-day. I shall go to my poor mother now; and I should not have left her, even for your company, Leandro, had she not been in a deep sleep after a night of wakefulness and trepidation. She has seemed much worse in her sad moods since that intru-

sion of the old cavalier into our garden the other day. She cannot get the idea out of her mind of there being a sepulchre in her room; and she says that the stony figures which lie upon it have taken the likenesses of you and me. O! Leandro, my heart shrinks when the fear rushes on it that this may be—madness! and yet she is quite aware that the whole is a delusion of her poor hypochondriac mind, though she cannot shake it off. How this melancholy conflict between her reason and her disease is to end I know not!"

And she burst into tears.

"Do not distress yourself so, Inesilla," said Leandro. "There has been for some time an oppressiveness in the air,—an unrelieved heat and aridity, which has great effect, they say, upon persons of infirm constitution. When the air shall be cooled and cleared, she will be better, depend on it; and such a change is

even now coming on. I have observed thick clouds swelling up over the horizon, there, for the last hour, and the suffocating feel of the atmosphere has increased as if the crisis were at hand. Make yourself happy, dear Inesilla; I shall find your mother better to-morrow when I come."

"Bless you for this comfort," replied the fair young creature; "you keep a store of consolation by you always, Leandro. If it will indeed be as you have predicted, how happy shall we feel to-morrow. How much you will have to tell us about your visit. We may even turn this evening's parting to good account; for will it not then be a luxury to say, yesterday at this time we were sad, for our meeting was over,—but to night——!"

Leandro's eyes beamed in acknowledgement of this lovely ingenuousness, while he exclaimed, "Well then it shall be as you pro-

pose, and to-morrow at breakfast we will meet again, and you shall hear an account of these selfish recluses. I shall be with you betimes: you will be visible all night to me in my dreams, and I shall wake only to have them realized."

"One word more Leandro," said Inesilla; "should there be any storm, any violent one I mean, promise me, that you will not venture out?—There now! I knew you would laugh at me; but *my* hardihood is not so great as your's; and think what I shall suffer if I imagine you are exposed to a night-tempest."

"Well, well," he replied, "I will do as you wish. Adieu, dearest, adieu!"

CHAPTER V

Wonder must speake, or breake; what is this? growes
The wealth of Nature here, or Art? it showes
As if Favonius, father of the Spring,
Who in the verdant meads doth reigne sole King,
Had rows'd him here, and shooke his feathers, wet
With purple-swelling Nectar!
*   *   *   *   *
The many pleasures that I bring,
Are all of youth, of heate, of life, and spring;
And were prepared to warme your blood,
Not fixe it thus. BEN JONSON.

LEANDRO, with the old servant who usually attended him, followed the directions given by his unknown inviter, and about nine o'clock arrived at the gates of a piece of ground which he thought answered the description of the place he sought. He knocked and was admitted into a woody enclosure, through the leaves of which the faint twilight had not

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power to struggle; and it was only by the motion of his horse that he found, after proceeding a few paces, that he was going down a hill. The declivity, however, was not steep; and he had leisure, as he passed the trees one by one, to observe that their trunks caught and gave back the little light there was, while all around was dusk. This brought to his recollection the description the stranger had given of the grove of silver-shafted beeches on the side of a hill. There were other trees nevertheless, and Leandro every now and then caught glimpses of two or three varieties standing alone in little grassy recesses. They were only seen as he passed near enough to touch them, for the darkness gradually increased and hovered about and absorbed their heavy outlines. But all the way as he went his senses were greeted with enchanting fragrance: the dew was on the grass and on the leaves, and

they sent their freshness up into the air, while the flowers and shrubs which lurked about in those hidden glades, filled it with odour. There was no other sound than the pleasant one of shallow waters.

The stillness, the sweetness, the twilight, the unbroken retirement of the place, and the solemn heavens hanging over all, operated strongly on Leandro's mind, who began already to be interested in his visit, and to speculate on what was to come.

The way now winding a little, he soon came in view of the house, saw the lighted windows, and at the same time heard faint strains of instrumental music, which as they increased occasionally in emphasis, came thrilling and thrilling through the soft air. Presently a female voice was distinguished: it was the beginning of a canzonet, and he had just heard the symphony; for the instruments, sub-

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siding into an accompaniment, kept on in a monotonous flow, after the Spanish manner, into which sea of sound the voice, with intervening pauses, dropped clear, short, and sparkling notes.

Leandro would have stayed outside the door to hearken to this music, but his attendant had gone in and announced him, and his listening abstraction was soon disturbed by the voice of his new acquaintance.

"We had given you up, Senor," said he; "I hoped you would have joined us unceremoniously on the lawn, from whence we have but just removed. The place appeared still enough, I'll be sworn, when you entered it; and yet a quarter of an hour ago our voices, under the trees here, were choral, and we made these slim branches," continued he, striking one of them aside, "shiver with our merriment. But come; the ladies, who have

presidency in-doors, are less boisterous, and one of them is even now fleeting away the time with a soft old melody."

Leandro scarcely knew what the old man said, his spirit was so completely drawn from him by that voice and that song. He was startled at once by a sudden burst of light and the cessation of the singing, and perceived himself in a magnificent room among a tolerably large company.

"This gentleman," said his conducter, "is the Senor Leandro de Bonadilla whom I told you to expect this evening. We ought to be proud of his visit, because I know he has left a young and betrothed mistress to come here; and, as I have not heard him utter a single syllable since his arrival at our gates, I conjecture his heart is doing penance for rashly leaving its established worship."

Our hero by this had recovered his self-

possession, and rallied his host in his turn; who after a short time led him to the centre of the room which was arranged with desks like a temporary orchestra, at one of which, surrounded by the instrumental performers, sat the lady who had just been singing.

"Permit me," said the ancient recluse, "to introduce this lady to you. You have disturbed her in her singing, but she will begin again I know at our request."

Leandro bowed silently, and the lady returned his salutation; casting at the same time a careless glance at him through the fringe of her half-closed eyelids, which consummated the fascination he began to feel was creeping over him. There was a dignity, not to say a haughtiness about her manner, which gave a certain gusto to the 'delicious beauty of her shape and face. Her hair, of a glossy black, was heaped up in large curls, and the erect position

of her head threw out the firm and marble swell of her bosom in superb luxury. Her figure was altogether of a bewitching roundness, and she knew without sacrificing an atom of ease or gracefulness how to display it.

The ceremony of introduction being past, the lady spoke a few words to the musicians, and, after they had played a short symphony, began again to sing; but it was not the melody which had sunk so deep into Leandro's heart on his arrival. He listened to it, though, with great interest, and the company shouted their applause when she ceased.

Our hero now had leisure to observe the room and the assembly it contained. The former was a stately, rich, round-arched saloon, well lighted and adorned with the finest specimens of Spanish and Italian art in painting and sculpture. The subjects of the pictures were either landscapes or representations

of the loveliest stories of mythological poetry. The sculpture had the same character of repose and mildness: nothing of violence was to be seen. The windows did not command any *view*, as it is called, owing to the groups of trees which stood about them in thickening overgrowth; but these, as Leandro could observe by the fitful emerging of the moon, were in lovely varieties, and formed landscape enough for an unboisterous and sequestered spirit.

The assembly had indeed a happy appearance. The men were handsome, gallant, eager-eyed, and full of intelligence; the women seemed in the young maturity of their charms,—in that voluptuous season of life when the freshness of the girl unites itself with the frankness and consciousness of womanhood.

The company now insensibly formed them-

selves into little parties for conversation; and our hero had opportunities of admiring the extensive knowledge of these recluses: the most startling deviations from the most established things in society were not made in a mere spirit of daring and wantonness, but were vindicated by dispassionate reasoning: they seemed intimately versed in the sciences, and were deep in the luxurious love of poetry and of nature.

Supper being announced, the party were conducted to a secluded spot in the heart of the thick garden. The place seemed contrived for the purpose of banqueting,—the plot of earth being covered with short turf, and entirely enclosed by young and tender trees, which, in untrimmed simplicity, shot up high over-head, and interlaced themselves archwise into a pleasant roof. Here the table was laid. The light came from an hundred lamps

hung carelessly among the plants,—some of them struggling in single beams from the depths of the coverture, and others crowding in golden constellations near the table.

"We have adjourned to this spot," said the old president of the association, "because the night is heavy and sultry, and if any air is to be had we shall find it here, imprisoned in the net-work of these cool leaves. With the light of these lamps, and, above all, of the ladies' eyes, we shall not miss the moon and stars, which are smothered by dense clouds stretched out and sleeping across the heavens. Sit down my friends."

The senses throb in contemplation of the picture made by that banquet. We hear, in our imagination, the rustling of the silk as the beauties sat down and adjusted themselves at the table: we see the cavaliers in the picturesque costume of their country,—the feast

set off with odorous flowers,—the plate richly wrought,—the dainty wine, like liquid rubies and topazes,—the light branches of the trees waving and bending as if in obsequious attendance,—and the lamps, which made lovely transparencies of the lower leaves, shewing their delicate veins, and then fading upwards into the gloom of the sultry heavens.

Leandro conducted the lady to whom he had been introduced, from the room to the garden, and seated himself beside her at supper. He thrilled from head to foot under the touch of a secret and irresistible fascination. A presentiment came over him, for which he could not account, that he was destined to arrive at the joy of her caresses; and if the guilt which allied itself to this feeling, trembled into his conscience and disturbed it, his anticipation was at the same time and by the same process rendered more exciting. He panted with ex-

pectation, though nothing had occurred to warrant it; for the lady instead of seeking to be attractive, sat by him in unapproachable stateliness and reserve.

The supper had not long commenced, when our hero's enchantress arose, and wishing the company good night, departed. Leandro felt confused and baffled and stung with disappointment at this. Had he offended her by venturing upon too great a familiarity? or had he unconsciously given her any clue whereby she might guess his thoughts? Her sudden retirement certainly indicated alarm, and filled our hero with chagrin and mortification. He endeavoured to join the conversation; but his remarks were pointless, and in some instances, ludicrously foreign to the subject discussed. This encreased his embarrassment: he thought his mind and the cause of its agitations stood exposed to the whole assembly; and on being

rallied about Inesilla, (to the idea of whom his mental absence was attributed) his uneasiness and shame became intolerable, and he left the place with something of abruptness.

He and his servant were attended with torches to the gates, and the road they were to take was carefully described to them. This caution was more especially necessary by reason of the deep darkness of the night, which, as they fared onward into the open country, and lost the faint stir lingering about the house, seemed to have struck an awe into all things, for not a sound of any kind was heard except the trampling of their horses, and these came upon the ear like an audacious interruption of a stillness so solemn, brooding, and ominous. Leandro's imagination would have been powerfully impressed by this character of the night on any other occasion; but now his soul was struggling under the grasp

of one strong idea, and external things had no capability to affect him. Unconsciously he suffered his horse to go on at random; while the servant, distrustful of his own judgment, and supposing that the silence of his master arose from extreme caution, followed implicitly; and, riding in this way for about an hour, they came within view of a town.

"Thank God, Senor!" exclaimed the man, "we are at home. We have had a dreary ride of it. I may say so, now that its all over. I I did not half like it, though, at one time, notwithstanding the good cheer I got at the house. Wine mostly makes a man valiant, Senor; but mine to night has made me giddy and suspicious; and, stop, now I look to my right and left, I hardly know what to make of the road even here: somehow or other it don't seem like the old spot. We ought to be near that large house of Don Alvar's; but what I can just see

close by us, like a shadow in the gloom, resembles more the slope of a mountain than a house. However, I suppose its all owing to the darkness, for to say the truth, Senor, I never was out in such a pitchy night before. Well! we shall be right enough when we get among the lamps there."

Leandro made no answer.

And now they came upon the first buildings, when the servant again raising his voice, called out:

"Stop, Senor! We have made a pretty mistake. This is not *our* town; and what's more, may I be flayed, if I know what place it is."

This called Leandro out of his reverie, who looking around him, answered:

"You are right, Guzman, you are right; we have indeed bewildered ourselves. It will not do for us to attempt to remedy our error now. We must look out for some inn, and

put up for the night. To-morrow we shall readily enough find our way home. Come, Guzman, let us go on yet a little further: we shall soon find a house to rest at."

"The sooner the better, Senor, in my mind," replied the man. "The storm which has been brewing all afternoon, won't be long, I should think, before it breaks; and a wet skin at this time o'night does no good to man nor beast. Here's a street down this turning, Senor, which looks a little more likely for our purpose; though I never saw such a forlorn-looking place as the town is altogether. The devil a christian (the saints forgive me!) have I seen since we entered it. Shall we turn down here, Senor?"

"It is indifferent to me which way we go, Guzman," replied Leandro.

They accordingly turned into a long and wide street, in which not a single living figure

appeared to break the perspective. Solitariness is never so overpowering as when it comes among the works of man. In old woods or on the tops of mountains it is graceful and benignant, for it is at home; but where thick dwellings are, it wears a ghostlike aspect. In the street our benighted travellers were pacing there was a fearful distinctness from one end to the other: the shadows from the lamps laid themselves down in melancholy peace: nothing came to disturb their shape. The loneliness weighed into the heart!

Leandro and his servant proceeded slowly along; and as they crossed one of the intersecting streets, the figure of a woman, wrapped in a sort of long veil, turned the corner and passed on before them. Leandro caught a glimpse of her face, and without a moment's pause dismounted, putting the bridle of his horse into his servant's hand.

"Here, Guzman," said he, "take charge of my horse. Seek the nearest inn. I will join you soon."

"In the name of all the saints, dear master, I hope you are not going to leave me alone, at midnight, in this unnatural place," replied the servant. "I begin to think the houses are all void, and that we have stumbled into some forbidden spot. You may depend on it I shall find no inn if I wander till morning; then what am I to do, dear master, with the poor beasts? See, how strange they look. Let us depart and follow any road we can get into. I am fear-frozen already.—Why Senor, Senor, you are not surely going after that draperied thing there, which (may the Holy Virgin protect me!) looks more like a phantom in this forsaken town, than a real flesh and blood christian. What then, you *will* go? Well! here I shall stand till the day-light, or the storm,

or something comes to make a stir in this dismal deadness."

The woman with a waving air passed down the solitary street; Leandro followed her; the servant, stupified and motionless, stood holding the bridles of the two horses in his hands.

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CHAPTER VI

Obscurely thro' my brain, like shadows dim,
Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick.
SHELLEY'S PROMETHEUS UNBOUND.

We will now return to Inesilla, who, at the time which held her lover on his strange homeward journey, was sitting with her father and mother in their hushed apartment, and ruminating on the expected pleasure of the morning. She was silent and abstracted, holding no intercourse but with her own sweet thoughts; her mother was also internally occupied, as appeared by the unmoving intentness of her eyes; while Don Andreas (happy careless old man!) after repeated and fruitless attempts to excite his companions to conversation, had

given himself up to the cherishing curve of his arm-chair, where he reclined in nodding acquiescence to the approach of sleep. At length, roused by an abrupt jerk caused by a more than usually heavy drop of his head, he jumped up and, rubbing his eyes, said:

"Well, spouse and daughter mine, this is a dumb and drowsy sort of night, and neither of you seem inclined to 'give it a voice;' I may as well be in bed as slumbering here, uselessly and uncomfortably."

"We'll all go soon, father," said Inesilla.

"Ay, ay, that's all very pretty," rejoined Don Andreas; "but I know full well the tedious interval between a woman's first talk of retiring and her arrival at her chamber door. I shall leave you to yourselves, and then you will not be hurried. Kiss me, Inesilla. There, that's a sweet child. Good night! Do not let your mother sit up long."

"Good night! dear father," answered Inesilla. "I know my mother must be worn out with her long restlessness. I shall talk her out of this fixed meditation, and then she will be sleepy. Good night!"

Don Andreas's footsteps still sounded in the corridor, when Inesilla, drawing her chair close to her mother, spake thus:

"Come, mother, are you ready for bed? You know we must be stirring early to morrow. Don Leandro will have an amusing story to tell us about the peculiar people he has been to see; and if we abridge our night's sleep, we shall not have attentive minds in the morning. In the *morning* do I say? why it is already near at hand. My father, who has been dozing in his chair, has just now retired, and my instructions were not to let you sit up."

She ceased awhile, but her mother returned no answer: Inesilla, then laying her hand on

her parent's lap, as if to second her words, resumed:

"Mother, I say; my father has just gone to bed, and I was to see that you did the same. We are to have a bright, clear, cool morning, and you are to be better and more cheerful, (for you know change of weather does you good) and Don Leandro is to tell us all about the strange society. If this expected storm is to take place to-night, we had better sleep through it, and open our eyes on the bright and purified day. We shall be merry to-morrow when the world is stirring about us, and the air is alive with the pleasant noise of birds, and the leaves are all lighted and dripping with the wet. Come mother, I am sleepy, let us go together."

Still Donna Blanca answered not.

"Dearest mother!" exclaimed Inesilla, "you terrify me with this silence. Speak to me, I

beseech you. It is late, and we are quite alone. Do not look *so*, or I shall sink. There,—that's very kind."

Donna Blanca sighed and turned her eyes upon her child:

"I am very, very low, dear Inesilla," she said. "You have roused me from fearful communings with my sad heart. Bless you for it! We will now go to rest, as you say."

They had taken up their lamps, and were about to leave the room, when a stunning clap of thunder came suddenly upon the stillness of the night, and sounded close above them even as though it smote the roof of the house. Inesilla and her mother were transfixed; and before the last reverberation of the peal was heard in the distance, another as loud shook them from head to foot with new terror. The winds seemed to hear these awful summonses, for they got up and panted, and

paused, and then, with more audible and continuous stir, came beating against the windows, bringing with them the sharp noise of rain in torrents.

"*Now*, dear daughter," exclaimed Donna Blanca, "I dare not proceed one step farther. ——Sleep! What, lie down in the midst of this hideous bustle of the elements? It is impossible.—There! the fierce dashing of that rain will overwhelm us! Jesu! Jesu! look down in pity: sustain us in the approaching large calamity, to which this tempest is the prelude!"

"What calamity, mother?" ejaculated Inesilla. "For God's sake, let me know what it is you dread. I can bear any certain evil, but not these wild fears of your's. My spirits are weary, and will give way if you talk in this manner much longer. This is not the first tempest we have known, and it cannot

reach us either here or in our chambers. Come, dear mother, let us to bed; or, if you prefer it, we will sit here where we are; only you must collect yourself, or I cannot answer for the effect it may have on me. It is a solemn hour, and all in the house are dead asleep: the rain, deluging as I must confess it seems, is the only evidence of motion about us; and if I am to sit in this place, I would rather have its noise than be surrounded by the midnight silence."

No answer was returned to these observations; so that our sweet girl gave up all expectation of rest for the night, and threw herself in her chair, and watched over her melancholy mother; the rain continuing its fierce descent, and the huge trees before the house keeping up the monotonous roar of their many leaves. Donna Blanca at length said:

"I have been taking refuge from my present dread in by-gone years, and have called up the memory of a night signalized by a strange event:—it was shortly after my marriage, Inesilla. My eldest brother, Sebastian—would to God I knew in what part of the world he is now, or if he is alive! but, alas! I fear he has long been slain by the fierce Asian infidels, against whom he went in an armed Christian campaign—he, I say, had passed the day with us on a bridal visit. It was a summer day; and the glorious green earth, the full-leaved trees, the uncultured flowers, the birds, the sky, and the common air, were all 'ministers of love.' It was one of my early days of perfect happiness, of light-hearted peace!

"At night we sat down wearied with our pastoral rambling; and after supper we gradually digressed from one subject to another, till we found ourselves, we scarce knew how, in

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the toils of the most absorbing of all themes, —tales of witchcraft, and ghosts, and evil agencies, and of the dreaded personal visitation of the great enemy of mankind. My brother was a holy man, a soldier of Christ,—yea vowed and dedicated to God from his tender youth, and he, with his pleasant words of piety, brightened our temporary gloom: for he well knew the fearful guile and power of the king of hell, and that he is ever busy to destroy us, working sometimes with temptations, and, when they fail, either scaring us with terrors, or smothering our minds in heaped-up clouds of melancholy; and then come unholy thoughts and dangerous surmises, and so we fall. These, dear Inesilla, have hovered, as you know, round me; but I throw myself into the bosom of the Church, and perhaps I may even yet be preserved."

"Mother, mother," said Inesilla, "I will

not have you talk in this way, I promise you. This is a subject for daylight and refreshed spirits,—not for this dark, dead hour, with our very souls fainting under the oppression of the weather and want of sleep. Come to bed, I implore you. Consider what my father would suffer, if he knew we were sitting up this dismal night, congealed with goblin-stories. Come, dear mother, come; and let the balmy sleep quiet your mind. You were sorely restless all last night, which has contributed, no doubt, to your present melancholy; but I have been your chambermaid to-day, and have prepared your bed with my own hands, for I know the conceit of this disposes you to rest:

'Take then of *me* smooth pillows, sweetest bed,
A chamber deaf to noise and blind to light,
A poppy garland, and a weary head!'

So writes the poet, and I speak it now because

verse is a great beguiler of gloom.——What! still fixed and silent? Well, if we *must* sit here tale-telling, let me be the narrator, and I will at any rate *try* to be sprightly, though my own voice sounds, in the stillness of this great room, with an ominous and unwonted tone. Even a jest becomes a shadowy thing at such a season as this. How intolerable, then, must be the ghastly fantasies you speak of!"

"Ghastly indeed they are," replied her mother; "and, if I mistake not, point to solemn things: but I must either talk of them, or brood over them, which is worse, in spite of your sweet solacing, my child.

"I told you, I think, that my pious brother dispersed the gloom into which our grim conference had thrown us, on the night I allude to; but our previous gaiety did not wholly return, and we sat occupied with calm thoughts.

The surrounding stillness was, however, broken by a sudden iron clap of thunder, like that of to-night, but unpreluded by any visible lightning. We were young then (your father and I), and the noise had no other effect on us than to rouse and free our abstracted spirits. Your father filled his last cup of wine, and after a brief observation or two on the unexpected thunder, we wished my brother good-night, and retired.

"We soon fell asleep; in which, however, we could not have lain long before we were disturbed by a noise below as of bolts being withdrawn. Your father took his sword and rushed down stairs; while I, too agitated to lie still, went to the casement and drew back the curtains. The dread of the thunder we had so lately heard, no less than the fear of the immediate noise, was on my mind as I did this; but I ventured, nevertheless, to look out,

—and lo! the night, instead of being black and unruly, was as serene as a slumbering child. The moon was in the heavens, and its reflection rested with a gentle thrill on the face of the stream that passes through our grounds. I was fairly bewildered with this phenomenon; but I had scarcely time to muse on it, before your father staggered into the room with a wild countenance, exclaiming, 'Do you see any thing in the garden?' My attention was attracted below with a fearful impulse, and I heard a rustling among the leaves, from whose shade there issued presently the figure of a woman. I did not see her face; but her form, something above the ordinary height, was of the perfectest symmetry, and the manner in which she paced along was stately beyond any thing I had ever seen. There was something in it, too, of disdain and mournfulness—like a captived queen treading the halls

of her conqueror. We had not gazed long, when another robed figure struggled through the underwood, and followed the first as if in pursuit; and these two continued their moon-lighted progress across the fields, until they arrived at the bank of the river, when a third shape, a cavalier in appearance, whom I had not seen before, was suddenly visible, and seemed using attitudes of menace to the woman, who shrank before him. The figure which had followed the woman from our house was yet at some little distance; but as it approached the other two, the woman was violently seized by the cavalier, and dragged towards the water.

"I now closed my eyes, for I feared to witness murder; but your father immediately cried out, 'Look! look!—a miracle! a miracle!' I looked, and behold! the two figures (the woman and the cavalier) were walking

on the surface of the water, as if it had been dry land!

"The third shape had now reached the stream, into which it plunged, as if endeavouring to come up with the other two. It plunged and sank, and seemed struggling awhile with the water; but the surface soon became smooth again, the figure was no more seen, and the water quivered softly, as before, under the glances of the moon. I was horror-stricken, and my first impulse was to fly out and aid the drowning creature; but, on looking down the course of the river, my eye distinctly perceived the woman and the cavalier, walking, as at first, with unsinking foot on its bosom; and away they went, with such amazing speed that in a moment or two their figures were as minutest specks in the extreme distance.

"I was confounded at this supernatural thing, and turning to your father, I said, 'You

have beheld this sight as well as I; but, nevertheless, let us not believe our eyes. We are deluded with these apparitions, which are nothing more than shadows, chimeras, mockeries fuming out of our brains, which have been abused by the grim stories we have told each to the other to-night. If they are more than this, let us beware how we witness their fearful antics any longer, and, above all things, come not near them; for doubtless they are agents of the devil, who is the author of all ghostcraft.'

"I could say no more, for my voice quaked and I could not calm it; and in spite of my philosophy I sank, fear-oppressed, into your father's arms.

"When I became a little more composed, he told me, that, on going down stairs to ascertain the cause of the noise, he found the great door of the house wide open, and saw what

seemed a female figure pacing over the lawn; and as he stood wrapped in wonder at this, another being, closely shrouded up, passed across the hall, brushed by him, and followed the first. He knew, and so did I, that no such creatures as these had sojourned in the house; and as his mind was prompted by the subjects of our late talk to a ready solution of the mystery, he adopted it, and concluded that what he witnessed was altogether supernatural. Under the influence of this terror he shrank within the house, closed the doors, and came up to me.

"This was all he knew; nor did we dare to pursue the discussion of the subject any longer, although we found it impossible to transfer our minds into any other theme. We therefore continued for some time dumb, and almost afraid to change our postures, lest our eyes might be again confronted with some

inexplicable ghastliness; for though we had often heard of such things, we still cherished a sort of mental reservation, and took comfortable refuge in incredulity. But now unearthly objects had manifested themselves, and stood palpably within our vision: and I declare to you, my child, that could I have been satisfied that what we had seen had really come from another world, I should have been less wretched than I was in contemplating it as a diseased delusion of my own mind; for that my faculties should desert, or play falsely with me, I have ever held in the greatest dread.

"I know not how long we remained in this stagnant state; but my attention was at length attracted to the moon, which was setting. It was pleasant to me to watch its great disk slip peaceably under the horizon; for what can be so healing to minds in the state ours then

were, as the common healthy operations of nature? Darkness succeeded, but it was only for a short interval; for from an opposite casement we presently saw the pale, cold dawn tremble into the sky like a gradual exhalation. Morning and its life were at hand; so we took courage, and thought of lying down to rest. 'Come, my love,' said your father, 'we have weathered through this night of witchcraft or morbid deception; and, before we lie down, let us beseech the Giver of all good that he will preserve our minds in health and temperance, or else ward from us these shades of hell, to encounter which it is plain we are too feeble. Kneel, Blanca, kneel!'—I knelt; but, alas! even our prayers were not to be sacred from panic; for first a rustling among the leaves below, and then a gentle tapping at the door, were heard. The noise, small as it was, beat like a stunning blow upon my head,

stupifying my faculties, and fixing my body in its attitude, like a petrifaction. "Don Andreas knelt beside me, and I think attempted a hurried prayer; but the knocking came again and again, and in a moment or so we heard a voice—a low, exhausted human voice. This in some measure relieved us, and going to the casement, we burst it open and looked again below. 'Do you see it?' exclaimed your father. 'It is a statue—a stone statue!' And, in good truth, that which we beheld looked like nothing else,—it was so motionless and white, and its drapery clung around it in such heavy and rigid folds.

"Don Andreas started aside, reached his sword, and said, 'We must not be the fools of these sights any longer: if we yield to them, they will eternally keep up their ghastly tyranny. But I will now go down and plant myself right over against this thing, and look

at it; and with God by my side I fear not to make it flee, for I feel that I have gathered strength from my prayer.'

"And so saying, he left the room, while I kept my eyes fixed on the mysterious object. But before your father had time to open the door below, the thing stirred and moved about with unseemly effort; whereat I uttered a loud scream, and the apparition lifting its head towards the noise, and seeing me, called out, 'Sister, let me in, I beseech you: I shall perish else with cold!' The face was turned full upon me, and I knew it, and felt reassured. At this moment your father darted forth with his drawn sword, and I lifted up my voice and cried out, 'For God's sake, Andreas, hurt him not; it is my brother—yea, Sebastian himself! There is no delusion now: I have seen his face, have heard his voice; hurt him not!—Ah! see, he faints!'

"I now ran below, and found my brother stretched on the damp grass, the coldness of which, alas! he could not feel; for the garment in which he was wrapped was wringing wet, his limbs were paralysed, and he seemed too much exhausted to speak. This situation of my brother, who we thought was sleeping peaceably under our roof, increased our perplexity, and we were hardly conscious of what we did, although no time was lost in assisting him into the house, where, having provided him with dry garments, your father laid him on his bed; for we did not like to rouse the servants, and let them participate in the mystery.

"My brother remained in his chamber, in a state of torpor, nearly the whole of the day; but towards evening he recovered a little, and acquainted us, in nearly the following words, with the particulars of his adventure. Do you listen, Inesilla?"

"Yes, mother," she replied; "and your tale is strange and marvellous enough. I wonder you have never told it me before; and I wish you would put off the remainder of it till the morning, when it will make a capital contrast to Don Leandro's story, which, I'll be bound to say, will be as merry as heart can wish. But you know what my father says,—that young bloods require sleep. My eyelids seem at this very moment as if they were made of lead, and wanted something to prop them up."

"My good girl," rejoined her mother, "I envy you your drowsiness. I must tax your patience, though, yet a little longer; and if we get over the ensuing day without any realization of the fears which I cannot shake off, though they are shapeless enough, I will not put your kindness again into such heavy requisition. You think, no doubt, that the subject I have chosen to talk about is calculated

to nourish and give strength to my forebodings; but it keeps my mind in a state of preparation for any thing dreary which might take place; the which it is better to meet in this tone of mind, than to be summoned out of sleep and placidity to encounter it."

"Why, mother, how you talk!" interrupted Inesilla. "This is, indeed, giving substance to shadows, which, you told me just now, my father had said are not to be yielded to, or they become tyrannical. Your story, frightful as it is, is better than these wretched surmises. Proceed, dear mother, I pray you."

"Well, then, my child," resumed Donna Blanca, "my brother, as I have said, recovered towards evening; when, calling your father and myself to his side, he spoke to the following purport:

"'You recollect,' said he, 'the thunder which burst over us last night, just before our

retiring to rest. I knew from the state of the weather that this could not be natural, and I was filled with suspicion of some necromantic juggle for dark purposes, though I did not communicate what passed within me to either of you. It was my resolution, however, on entering my chamber, not to go to bed for the night; so disencumbering myself of my outer garments, I wrapped myself in a loose dressing-gown, took a book, trimmed my lamp, and sat down in a chair by the bed-side.

"'Presently the room began to fill with a fragrant mist, even as though a great censer was fuming into it; and the clouds thereof rolled and swelled and undulated about it, till they hung like one thick veil over all the room and the objects it contained. The outward air was filled all this time with a strange, dull, murmuring noise, as though some magical operation was being wrought clandes-

tinely; and in the midst of it I thought I heard the whispers of a grief-laden voice. Still the exhalation thickened about me, and I was constrained to close my eyes against its smarting entrance. Meanwhile the indescribable murmur and buzz came nearer and nearer, and at length opened into a diapason of drowsy harmony. I trembled nevertheless with expectation, not unmixed with fear; but having put up to Heaven a secret supplication for aid against the foe that walketh in darkness, I felt reassured and calm.

"'It was not long before the mass of vapour was intersected here and there by thin lines of light, which gradually widened; and the whole, separating into individual clouds, finally melted away. I found now, however, that I was no longer alone; for right opposite to me was seated a woman of radiant and unspeakable beauty. In her dress she reminded

me of the manner in which the priestesses of Venus are described by the Heathen poets; and, like them, her brows were bound by an awful sacerdotal fillet. This, however, was no doubt connected in some way with the incantation she had evidently been performing. The effect of her attire altogether was very solemn—enough so to have quelled the seductions of any personal beauty I had ever before this hour seen; but her's shone through, and triumphed over it; and had there not been in the expression of her eyes a spiritual melancholy, which seemed ashamed of the carnal voluptuousness of her shape and complexion, I know not whether the exorcism I pronounced would not have languished as it passed my lips, and been metamorphosed into love-sighs—so enchanting was the luxury.

"'I steadily, however, adjured her as an unholy phantom, and looked to see her vanish;

but she still remained, nothing daunted at the sacred ceremony. While I was filled with wonder at this, she told me, in a wailing voice, that though she was sent to this house with an evil purpose, her own intention was good, if she could find it possible even at a stupendous risk to effect it. She then related her strange and frightful and sad history.

"'She had lived centuries ago! the sovereign beauty of her time; beloved, yea almost worshipped, by princes and nobles of her own country, together with those of distant parts of the earth, who came from opposite regions on amorous pilgrimages to her, pressing incessantly their warm siege, although it was publicly known that she was not free from the guilt of incontinence — nay, that she had become a mother!

"'Among the wooers who continually environed her was one, an ancient man, a phi-

losopher, a dealer in hidden things, but withal of a joyous character. No one knew his family, nor from whence he came, nor where he dwelt; but she, charmed by his eloquent converse and wondrous tales, gave herself up to frequent communion with him, wherein he passed in alluring discussion from one forbidden thing to another, till at length he prepared her to listen to a proposal which had for its object the perpetuation of her beauty! She was already intoxicated in her human pride; but the prospect of becoming fadeless and perennial, and of receiving the homage of successive generations, dazzled her even to a frenzied delight, and she almost overlooked the impious conditions by which alone this immunity from decay was to be obtained. One thing only—the natural love of her children—made her pause. How could she live on in youth and strength, and see her off-

spring, now lisping in infancy, fall in gradual decline into the forlorn decrepitude of old age and death, followed perhaps by gray-headed descendants to the grave? This thought, however, was but transient, being speedily swallowed up in the prospect of everlasting bloom; and, deliriously, she consented to the awful bond! But now with what gladness would she accept the most loathsome condition of human nature, as a passport to death!

"'It was dreadful to her, she said, to live from age to age, and hear the devilish destruction wrought by her own agency quoted as antique ghastly legends. But she was held in tremendous thrall, and did not dare to expect her deliverance until the end of all things, when she was not without a hope that her long penitence would plead for her before the Eternal Judge.

"'She had for many hundred years been

charged with successive missions of destruction against our family! which, nevertheless, she had contrived should always be frustrated, and that our ancestors from generation to generation should bequeath a spotless fame. She would not state the cause of her watchfulness over us, only that we were dear to her beyond utterance. She sobbed as she said this; and then went on to tell me that she was even at that time under a command to lure you, dear Blanca, and your husband, into the toils of the dreaded one; but that, knowing my character, and that I was now sojourning with you, she had made haste to set forth on her errand, in hopes of my effectual counteraction. She had caused the unseasonable burst of thunder, as a warning to me (which my occult knowledge made intelligible) that something supernatural was about to ensue, and to put me on my guard: she had also conjured

up that perfumed haze, and those aërial harmonies, in order to lull and charm the vigilance of the inferior spirits, who were called out of their central caves, where nothing lovely is, to spy over her actions. Of these magical artifices she was, however, utterly weary, and longed with sickening impotence of will after dear human nature, with its pains and infirmities and sacred sorrows. She was heart-riven, but could not die; penitent, but dared not pray!

" 'This, dear Blanca, was an awful parlance: I was in the same room with a demon! Strength, however, was vouchsafed to me from high, and I quailed not, but, looking at the afflicted thing, I exclaimed, "A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise!" Thou art now repentant; yea, even human tears flow from thine eyes apace: seize the precious moment,—delay not thine own salvation whilst thou art so tenderly watching over that of

others—kneel with me! Lo! I, weak in humanity, will protect thee from the rage of those with whom thou art horribly leagued: I need but to advance the Cross in faith and righteousness, and the fiends who may come to snatch thee will be impotent. Kneel!

"'At these words of mine, an ague-like shivering came over her, and she whispered that she dared not kneel, for her dreadful oath rang for ever in her ears, and remembered menaces sounded with it. Having said this, she buried her face in her hands, and I could plainly see the throes of the agony she underwent. I thought the room trembled with them.

"'Upon recovering herself a little, she asked if I dared go with her, and she would guide me to one of the haunts of her infernal comrades, where I might confront the conclave with a holy denunciation, and scare them to

some other part of the earth, so that they might cease to persecute our devoted family. I must however penetrate their den alone, for she must seem absent on her errand. She wished me steadily to examine myself, and if I thought my fortitude would not give way, I might safely go; otherwise I might on no account attempt it.

"'My heart beat high within me at thought of this enterprise, and I made no other answer than "Lead on!"

"'She then arose, exulted awhile that the main scheme against you, my sister, was frustrated, though her coming could never be entirely hurtless, and, uttering the word "Follow," she left the room. We passed on, I fixing a steady gaze on my conductress; but, ere we had proceeded far, another being was seen standing on the wide field, which but an instant before was void of all but the

woman and myself. There were no trees at hand, no hedge, no wall, no covert, or hill, from the shade of which he could have darted forth into the moonlight; but there he stood, palpable and distinct! The woman seemed terribly disquieted at his approach, and shrank as he seized and dragged her towards the river, at whose margin they had arrived. My resolution to dare the undertaking was not abated at this, and, thinking they meant to cross the river, I plunged after them; but the water arose on the sudden into great waves, which buffeted me about till my human strength was palsied. I could make no way, but was thrown fainting on the bank; and it was long before I could even stagger homewards.'

"This, Inesilla, was my brother's wondrous narrative twenty years ago; and I have related it now because I feel as if it had some dark

connexion with my present dread, indefinable though it be."

Donna Blanca now ceased speaking, and expected her daughter would make some observations upon the story just concluded. Inesilla was, however, silent; but just as her mother was about to address her again, behold! the ancient cavalier stood full before her. His eyes flashed, and he smiled a bitter smile of indefinable triumph; while Donna Blanca, trembling almost to death, exclaimed, "Who art thou? What dost thou here? How didst thou get admitted? I know thee not. Speak! I fear thee for thy dumbness. How darest thou stare so at me?—thine eyes burn me—they are fiendish. Avaunt!——Inesilla! Inesilla! how can you sit composedly there, when this hellish man comes to blast us with his strange exultation?—Alas! she stirs not! —thou hast spell-bound her, detested thing!

Help! help!—Andreas! Andreas!" And she sank almost lifeless upon the floor.

The cries startled Don Andreas out of his sleep, even as though some one had grasped and shook him: he sprang out of bed, and flew towards the room from whence they issued, where he found his wife stretched out in a deep swoon, and his child placidly asleep. Having in some measure recovered the former, he said:

"Now all this comes of your refusing your natural sleep, as I feared you would do when I left you in that blank mood with Inesilla, who was charged to bring you to your rest. See, poor child! she is dead asleep in her chair, wearied with vain soliciting! Why will you encourage your melancholy in this painful manner?"

"Was any body with us when you came in?" said she eagerly.

"No, no," he answered: "who should be here?"

"O Andreas!" she exclaimed in a bursting voice, "I shall never be able to quit your side again. I need protection—indeed I do: I have seen a dreadful man to-night; the same, doubtless, who appeared to Inesilla and Leandro the other morning in the garden; and who, if I make not blessed error, is destined to be to me a constant presence."

Don Andreas looked thoughtfully as she uttered this; but he put on a forced composure, and said:

"Your old terrors have thronged about you pretty plentifully, I find. What else, indeed, was to be expected at this dull season of night?"

"It is morning," returned Donna Blanca, uncurtaining the lattice. "The tempest is overblown; the black and heavy trees are

still at last, tired of their mad tossing; and, look, the dawn is shivering up like a wrinkled ghost!"

"Talk humanly, my dear wife, for God's sake!" said Don Andreas. "Are these fit words, think you, to wake our sleeping girl? Come, sweet child, lift up thine heavy eyes, and rest them again in a fitter place. Start not, precious one; 'tis thy father. There: softly, softly. Now, dear Blanca, take my other arm, and let us to the haven of our chambers."

THE TAMUDDENDR MAHARAJAH ... MAHAL.

CHAPTER VII.

The inquietudes of fear, like lesser streams
Still flowing, still were lost in those of love:
So love grew mightier from the fear!—
* * * * * * *
I swore, and with an inward thought that seem'd
The purpose and the substance of my being,
I swore to her, that were she red with guilt,
I would exchange my unblench'd state with her's.

COLERIDGE.

"I AM at home now," said the Lady to Leandro; for it was her whom he had met in the recluse society. "Thank you," she continued, "for your company thus far. Good-night."

"Nay," returned Leandro, "do not let us think so soon of valedictions. I am loath, lady, to prompt your hospitality; but I am

a perfect stranger in this place, benighted and bewildered. The morning is at hand; and, till it shall arrive, grant me the shelter of your roof, that I may see my road clearly, and not wander into farther entanglement."

This conversation took place in front of a pair of huge gates, which stood in the middle of a long and high wall. Leandro and the unknown Lady had passed through street after street in that ghostly town, and now, it seemed, had arrived at the opposite suburb to that at which they had entered, for there were no houses fronting where they stood, and what little air there was came freshly on their senses. Leandro pressed his request again on the Lady, who heaved a loaded sigh, and then, ringing a bell, invited him in.

They were speedily admitted; and having crossed a spacious court-yard paved in alternate black and white marble, Leandro found

himself in front of a magnificent building, the extent of which he could not see, by reason of there being no other light than what came from the lamps hanging in golden chains from the deep cornice of a colonnade. The portion, however, thus revealed, confounded the gaze with the excess of its sumptuousness: flights of steps, crowned by columns of Phrygian marble and costly workmanship, stretching away in "far piazzian line," and losing themselves in the gloom of the distant lamps; with other columns overhead, fenced in by balustrades forming a repetition of the gallery, which was again repeated upwards and upwards till the eye lost all distinction of their range. Before him were statues here and there of the finest art; endless representations, in various guise and groups, of Venus and Adonis, Cupid and Psyche, Zephyrus and Flora, Bacchus and the awful Circe and their

son Comus, Peleus and the sleeping Thetis, Neptune and Amphitrite, Pan and Syrinx, Pluto and Proserpine, transformed Jupiter and Antiope, and Apollo and the fearful Daphne. These, as our hero passed along the colonnade, came one by one upon the sight; and although their forms were conceived and executed in a taste of the most wanton sensuality, yet they had a solemn look as they stood in the retired shadow of the pillars. This feeling was increased by the grand silence in which every thing was embalmed; for the atmosphere was motionless and seemed ready to swoon under some heavy oppression, only that a fountain hard by, heard but not seen, refreshed the air a little, and sweetened the stillness with its gentle and pensive plash; and ever and anon, as the piazza turned, Leandro saw, through vistas of trees, the different aspects of a fantastic pavilion which stood in the centre

of the wide area. The whole struck on the mind as a vision—an architectural chimera of the dreaming Piranesi.

Here, then, in the mazes of this world of pillars and galleries, arcades, marble sculpture, and solemn interior groves, was our hero pacing at the first grave point of dawn, with an inscrutable and silent companion, who seemed, by her painful gestures (if pain could hold fellowship with such beauty), to be revolving thoughts of high calamity. She was entranced by her own meditations; and there, in those gorgeous terraces, she would have walked for ever, wrapped in a solemn reverie, had not Leandro, who was beside himself with wonder and the continual stings of amorous tyranny, broke the silence.

"Fair creature!" he exclaimed in a faltering voice; "divine consummate beauty! mysterious princess of this most regal pile! pardon

me, I pray thee, for the words I am about to utter. I have tracked thy steps, and besought admittance to thy dwelling, not for shelter as I at first said, but with a higher purpose—that I might woo thee! Nay, start not: I am spell-stricken, not presumptuous. The rays of thy beauty, which make all things proud, investing them like a glory, fall on me with painful excess of deliciousness, and I tremble! Thou art the siren whose richly-warbled seguidilla thrilled into my heart at that strange assembly! Why didst thou bewitch me then, and now repel me with this loftiness? Disdain me not, I implore thee, or I shall go mad! Suffer me to press those lips; or, if thou deniest me, prepare thyself, Enchantress, to see these crystal floors streaked with my blood, for I can no longer live!"

At these words the Lady shuddered, and sighed out, "Alas! alas!" And Leandro,

taking courage at her weakness, flung his arms about her, and drew her full bosom to his heart. There he held her for a time folded in that strict embrace, till, looking in her face, he found it had turned ashy pale,—for she had swooned! He shouted for assistance, but nothing came to him except his own voice pealing back again in great reverberations. What was to be done? O how he repented his unhallowed violence! The drip of the ceaseless fountain, however, suggested a remedy. Thither he bore her; and having sprinkled her face, the life-tints began again to mantle there; while, like a deified creature, he stood in that majestic place sustaining a proud burden, and imbibing, as he watched her recovery, fresh poison from the unguarded revelation of her charms.

Having breathed again, she gently disengaged herself from his caress; and restoring

the upper part of her vest (which had been rubbed aside) to the home of her globed bosom, "as though she would repress or hide its heavings," she motioned Leandro towards a little enclosed recess, and, opening a door, desired him to remain in that room till she sent for him. The door then closed, and she was gone.

Leandro now found himself in a little apartment of dove-coloured marble, decorated with even rustic simplicity; the air felt cooler, and the change from the presence of that radiant creature amid the splendour of the terraces, to this lone and pensive room, tamed the riot of his heart, and he gradually sank into deep thought.

"Where am I?" said he to himself. "Is it all a human dream, or do I struggle in the toils of some strong enchantment? Can I really have beheld the grandeur of this won-

drous and unrecorded palace? and is it possible that such beauty can exist upon the earth as I have seen, or dreamed I've seen, in that voluptuous woman? How came I into that strange road which led me hither? —I suspect the old man, and that he and his society are —— But I must not think thus, for I am in the toils, and need my undazed reason to free myself. And yet it cannot all be sorcery, for the mistress of this place seems weighed down with a human sorrow.—Be it however as it may, illusion or reality, I feel my happiness is gone. Farewell, serenity and placid home-bred enjoyments! O Inesilla! natural-hearted, faithful girl! *this* is the night, and *these* are the events that I have promised to tell to thine ears to-morrow, if that indeed I am ever to see thee or morrow any more! But a dismal foreboding, the first approaches of which came upon me as I

passed into that ghastly town, now broods with one overwhelming shadow over my soul! I fear I am a doomed man!—Bless thee, my gracious, gentle love; and mayest thou never know my guilt!"

His emotions now overcame him, and, covering his face with his hands, he leant his head on the table, and so remained in a bitter agony.

Presently there came upon his ear the twanging of a guitar in soft preludes. The sounds seemed to be almost in the room. Leandro could not choose but hear it; and had not his mind been bound down by remorse to the idea of Inesilla, these sweet homely sounds would have suggested it. The preludes ceased, and there was a pause, followed by a plaining voice chanting a melody which was as familiar to Leandro as the echoes of his father's hall. He listened attentively, grief-

stricken as he was; and, to his utter astonishment, the following words of his own serenade, with which he was wont to call poor Inesilla out of her matin slumbers, were heard trembling upon the air:

> "What to him is a summer star,
> If his Love's afar?
> What to him the flower's perfuming,
> When his heart's consuming?
>
> "He hath ridden many a mile,
> But to see her smile!"

The voice was now stifled, as though the singer wept; but soon, in the waywardness of sorrow, it began to wail forth the tune again, trying the verses from the beginning:

> "Inesilla! I am here—
> Thy own cavalier——"

But it was in vain: the strong grief again o'ermastered the voice; the musical tone could

not be sustained, but shook and loosened itself into rapid sobs! Leandro wept too, and dared not look up. The last words he had heard pierced like barbed darts into his soul, and would not be shook away. It seemed as if an inward voice was cruelly iterating them: "Inesilla, I am *here!* *Thy own* cavalier!" And then the hour returned again when first he had sung these verses, in purity of heart, to his pure love: and he thought of their yesterday's sweet pleasure, with books and quiet talk, in the pastoral woods; and of yester-evening, when she gave him a hundred kisses for want of better spells to bind him to her. Then came the words with stronger assault: "Inesilla, I am *here!* *Thy own* cavalier!"

As a relief from these throes of conscience, he ventured to lift his head; and in a corner of the room, lo! there stood his love—his gentle, innocent Inesilla! At first he thought

it was the strong impression of his mind acting on his weary outward senses; so he closed his eyes again for a little space, and then rubbing them with his fingers, as though he sought to stimulate their proper action, he gazed towards the spot once more; but there she still appeared. She was dressed in plain white garments, and wore a chaplet of pale roses in her hair, which fell unringleted about her shoulders: from her dropped arm her guitar hung carelessly and in unusual sort, as if its sweet employment were for ever done: her eyes were on the earth: she looked like a sacrifice!

"Now God be thanked for this—that thou art here, my blessed angel!" exclaimed Leandro. "I have done great wrong, I know,—great wrong to thee, thou unreproaching one! but I have been strongly tempted, and it is now over. Mourn no more, my love; nor any

longer look as thou dost now, speechless and heart-broken! Tell me, sweet one, how camest thou in this spell-raised mansion? and how didst thou get courage to sing that love-prompted song in such a place?—But let us speak of that another time; for my senses are now strangely abused and bewildered. Come, fill once more thy wonted place in my arms, and let us fly to our dear home."

No answer was returned to this; but a female voice from without screamed, in a hurried and supplicating tone, "Fly! fly!"

"Ho, ho! rebellious kite!" another voice immediately roared out; "have I caught thee again at thy old schemes? What! dealing with shadows and effigies, in hostility to thy sworn allegiance, eh? For this, mutinous wretch, thou shalt be damnably heart-racked, I promise thee, unless thou straight behavest better."

And even as these threatening words were uttered, the figure of poor Inesilla fluttered with confused outline on the air, with which it mixed and became nought!

Leandro was confounded and speechless, and stood fixed in the room staring at the spot where the vision had appeared. Had he been left to himself a few moments longer, his mind would have returned to him, and then he would have raved and done some high deed of wrath which might have disenthralled him; but this blessed chance was not to be. The door instantly opened, and a young girl, in a tunic of white silk, appeared and told Leandro that her mistress waited for him in the pavilion. He heeded her not at first, but she seized his cloak and drew him onwards.

And now the lightning came in sulphureous flashes, the thunder smote amain upon the air,

and the heavens quaked with its noise; while the large rain, in headlong descent, rattled upon the building and the trees standing in its area. Leandro, recovering out of his trance, felt his heart begin again to ferment with the passion that had devoured him in the former part of the night; he descended the innermost steps of the colonnade, and, all wild and panting, passed forth into the tempest. The branches of the high trees, among which he walked, were interlaced overhead, and formed a canopy against the rain; but the rapid visitations of the lightning laid bare the depths of the grove, illuminating the way to the pavilion. Leandro rejoiced in the storm—it suited the desperate tumult of his soul: a calm would have been dreadful.

Our hero and his guide having reached the pavilion, ascended the portico, passed into a wide vestibule, and from thence into an ante-

room furnished with a steaming and fragrant bath, together with every accommodation which the most capricious luxury could desire—thick Persian carpets, couches, mirrors, &c. The little nymph who had accompanied our hero thus far, now disappeared by another door, and he lost no time in plunging into the water, wherein having laved himself he arose refreshed; and a slave entering at this time with change of raiment, he dressed himself therewith, and was conducted, through long corridors, to the interior saloon of the pavilion.

But how shall the witchery of this place be told? It was a spacious room hung with floral tapestry, and illuminated by a golden chandelier of vast magnitude hanging from the dome, whereon was painted with breathing skill the sweetest of the then known love-stories. In

the centre of the floor was an alabaster basin (richly overwrought with figures of fauns and struggling nymphs among vine branches) that held its mirror of translucent water under the many lights of the chandelier. One of the sides of the saloon opposite the entrance was in the form of an arch, supported on curiously-carved cedar pillars; and the silken curtains which hung from them being half withdrawn, disclosed an open space which looked out into a foliaged bower or conservatory, lighted in a dim manner by tapers shining through transparent marble vases. The whole saloon was filled with the night-strengthened odours of myrtle, citron, and orange-trees, which came from this place: but what attracted Leandro's observation as much as any thing was a Grecian urn standing alone in the midst of the span of the great arch, and filled with a

profusion of large jet-black flowers*, nodding, like funereal plumes, over its white rim.

A table by the fountain was stored with delicate cool fruits, heaped up in baskets of embossed silver, and crystal beakers of the finest wine.

The Goddess of the place was there newly arrayed in a close, slight, rose-coloured vest, set off by a fluttering outer garment of white satin. The depths of her bosom were il-

* The Author saw, a short time ago, at the house of a friend, some *black* Holly-hocks. He does not know whether they are common or not, but he never saw the colour before in any thing floral, and it struck him as something exceedingly grand and mournful. The force of the impression was, no doubt, derived from the contrast this flower affords to all other flowers—the most cheerful and gaudy things in the creation. The lofty, plumed shape of the Holly-hock, and the number of its large blossoms, add to the solemnity of this black species.

lustrated by a necklace of sparkling diamonds; and thus, pressing a soft crimson-velvet throne, she beamed and blazed in the melting excess of her loveliness; only it must not be forgotten, that upon her melancholy forehead she had twined a cypress-wreath.

Leandro and the Lady were alone. The storm which raged without could not be heard in that interior place: the sultry weight of the atmosphere, however, penetrated there, and the gloom of utter silence hung over all; but this deepened rather than diminished the voluptuousness.

"You are voiceless, fair creature," said Leandro to his companion. "I am come here at your bidding, but you welcome me not, although you see I am even ready to die for one kind glance. Good God! your eyes are clouded with recent tears, and you palpitate like one just respited from some sore

trouble. Whence all this mystery? Why, with such sad looks, have you put on that airy, roseate dress, which flushes your beauty, already too intense? What has afflicted you since I came here, that you have twined a cypress branch about your brows? and why is the splendour of this saloon dispirited by that urn of hearse-like flowers?—Still you do not speak; and yet the gaze you bend on me is not of disdain, but sorrow. I am perplexed almost to madness with these marvellous contrarieties, and, above all, with a burning love of thee, divine one!"

And so saying, he knelt before her and seized her hand, which hung listlessly down, kissing it again and again with fierce longing. At this moment a sound as of many instruments floated into the room. It was a slow, deep-toned melody—solemn, but withal voluptuous; it seemed as if it languished

and throbbed from out the secret heart of luxury.

"This," said Leandro, "is the very refinement of cruelty. You have surrounded me with amorous music, and the incense of flowers, and love-pictures, and have dressed yourself more alluringly than Cleopatra when she panted down the Cydnus to meet the Roman triumvir; yet do you maintain a stately dumbness and melancholy! You would cease to perplex me in this way, did you know the torment I endure."

Her hand faintly grasped and shook his when he said this; but it was done more like a tender mother than a mistress. To him, however, who till now had not met with the least encouragement from her, this little kindness was transporting. He arose, went to the table, and filling a goblet of wine, exclaimed—"Thus will I celebrate thy first sweet act of grace!"

But before he had time to lift it to his lips, the Lady rushed upon him, and, grasping his arm which held the goblet, looked at him with a beseeching expression, and cried out—"Touch not the wine, I entreat thee; for *my* sake, touch it not!"

"Not for an empire," returned Leandro, "if thou forbiddest me."

And a smile, which seemed to be an echo of the heart's gratitude, passed over the face of the Lady as he spoke; and she took her crimson seat again upon the couch.

"Come here, Leandro," said she in her mellow voice; "come and sit by me."

Leandro, hearing this, trembled from head to foot in an overwhelming ecstasy, and, throwing himself upon the couch, twined his arms about her, buried his head in the soft interstice of her deep bosom, and tugged her full shape to his heart. Words were not want-

ing in this whirlwind of his passion,—warm supplications, mad entreaties, impure avowals of his desire.

"Alas!" said she, "you know not what you ask. Do you see that veiled tablet? On it is transcribed an oath—a tremendous oath—which you must take before the desires which have arisen in you can be gratified."

"Conduct me to it," raved Leandro: "I will read it, swear it, be it what it may. I am mad! Do not displace my arms from thy waist; but, thus encircling thee, let me swear the conditions, and the Heathen Jupiter will envy my vast joy."

"You would be lost for ever," replied she, "were you to take that oath. O Leandro, calm yourself! We shall not be long together; do not distract the little interval which is in my power, but listen. There—keep your head, if so it please you, on my

bosom: I will nurse it fondly, tenderly, dear Leandro. You wonder I should know your name. Ah! you little think how long it has been engraven on my heart! I am a miserable, miserable creature—a wretch, a condemned thing! and fierce are the torments I shall endure for what I am now saying to thee;—torments, Leandro, which would stun thee only to hear named. But I feel that the power of my enemy will not last for ever; every single act such as I am now striving to effect shakes the omnipotence of his tyranny."

"Now I understand thy grief and tears," said Leandro. And he started up, laid his hand upon his sword, and shouted out, "Where is the tyrant?"

"Poor youth!" she replied, "thy sword in this place would be but as a straw in a baby's hand. No, Leandre: strength of *mind* alone is potent here; and yet I thank thee. Look

upwards to the window in the dome: the morning light and the tapers below are struggling in a faint warfare.—*Inesilla will soon expect thee!*"

Leandro, hearing this, reeled several paces as though some one had struck him; and he stammered out, "How knowest thou *that*, enchantress?"

"It is my wish," she resumed, "that thou shouldst meet her still in some sort, though I faint to think how, for ye are both precious to me."

"Wonder upon wonder!" ejaculated Leandro; "mystery upon mystery! When shall I breathe again a natural life? when will these riddles be solved? Dost thou know that in that little room, where I waited by thy direction, I saw a vision of —— ay, I will speak it out, for thou hast schooled me—of my virgin love, my Inesilla? I saw it as clearly

as ever I saw her in my life; and heard her voice, her sweet voice, singing a favourite tune, till I was melted to tears, and forgot even thee and thy unexampled fascination. There she stood in a lamenting attitude before me; and I thought it was she, indeed, till a fatal voice, growling out strange threats, chastised her into air.—Whose was that voice? was it the tyrant's of whom thou just now spakest?"

"Name him not, I charge thee," she hastily interrupted. "It was I who sent that vision of thy love; but this palace and these luxurious splendours are none of mine. I must be brief with what I have yet to say, for I feel that I am on the brink of a merciless punishment. My prison-house is ready for me; the tormentors are gaping for their pastime! But I have undergone it before, and each repetition of suffering circumscribes their power.—Look

at me, Leandro! I, whom thou now seest before thee,—on whom thou hast lavished hot caresses,—have trod this earth, this wearisome earth, for centuries, held in my incarnate state by him, who bears the unutterable name of Dread!—Ah! now *thou* shrinkest from *me;* and *I* am turned the suitor, and must implore, as I do from my heart, that I might feel thine hand once more, and kiss thee ere we part for ever!—And Inesilla, too, my beloved girl! would I could see ye both happily together, and then I should take one sweet remembrance with me to muse on in my torture. But it cannot be!—Hear me, Leandro; hear me, and do not disbelieve what I say; for if thou scornest my words as a mere fable, it will indeed be a sore aggravation of my sufferings. —I am thine and Inesilla's ancestress! Your families took their separate rise from my two children, who never knew each other, for they

were the fruits of different amours. You and Inesilla are the last of the race; but I had hoped to see it take a fresh and precious spring from your union with her. It has, however, been the infernal device of my enemy to make me the means of the damnation of my own descendants, who are and have been to my affections, from generation to generation, even as my own flesh and blood. But though he has contrived that they should go through many bitter injuries, I have foiled him in his main design; and I rejoice!"

Leandro now felt the dread was at an end, with which she had for a moment or two inspired him. He gazed awhile on her meek but anguished countenance, and, flinging himself at her feet, hid his head in her lap and burst into tears. In a minute she exclaimed, in a fearful voice,

"Hush!—hark! Do you hear that iron

noise? He comes! he comes! Now, Leandro, now is the time: exalt thy courage—yield not; call on thy Saviour!—Look! the walls of this place totter—the wild grass is already beneath thy feet; thou standest under the open clouds! He comes in his terror—in his terror! Remember me, my dear child: bind up thy nerves!—He approaches nearer and nearer! Ah! he's here!—Mercy! mercy! O! mercy!"

And the shrieks died away on the desolate and wide air.

CHAPTER VIII.

Now Phœbus 'gan to shed his stremis shene
Amidde the Bulle with al the bemis bright,
And Lucifer to chaice awaie the night,
And hertis hevie for to recomforte
From drerihed of hevie night'is sorowe.

CHAUCER.

THE sun had commenced his journey some hours when Inesilla, after a deep but short repose, left her pillow and came down into the breakfast-room. Her spirits, overpressed by her watchfulness in the first part of the night, were cheered at sight of the present delightful aspect of Nature, for it was in truth a lovely morning. The air was serene and fresh; the last drops of wet had passed away from the leaves; the sky, cleared of its load of clouds,

was seen again in the beauty of its glad blue; and the birds, which had shivered through the ruinous night, now plumed and dried their wings, and sang their happy notes out in the pure air. The earth, after so long a drought, had drank in every drop of the heavy rain, so that no vestige of the storm remained, except in the brighter green of the foliage and the grass.

The casement of the breakfast-room, which had a trellis, vine-canopied, before it, commanded a view of many miles over a fertile country, painted by the different colours of pale olives—orange-trees shewing their gilded fruit in spite of the jealous leaves, green myrtles, the starry jessamine, vines with their amethystine clusters, brown masses of rock over which the scarlet flowers of the opuntia trailed; with here and there clumps of large chesnuts and stupendous woods of cork, and

streams which, notwithstanding the night-rain, were still running a lazy summer pace towards the Guadaliviar.

Our sweet girl had with her own hands laid out the morning's meal, and decked the table with glasses of flowers, knowing that Leandro liked to see them. She wondered that he had not arrived, for he was generally early in keeping appointments made with her; and she had already waited nearly an hour in expectation of him, when Don Andreas came into the room and told her she must not expect her mother to leave her chamber that day.

"I am not surprised to hear this," said Inesilla, "after such a time as she had last night: but I could not, with all my persuasion, tempt her to her pillow. She was determined to sit up, brooding over I know not what of gloom; and it seemed as if she thought the tempest was to swallow us up for ever. Among other

things, dear father, my mother told me a strange story of a goblin-woman who terrified you and her; but, above all, my uncle Sebastian. I do not recollect much about the particulars, for I was oppressed with sleepiness all the time, and the stream of my mother's words, flowing on in her grave voice, completely lulled me. The tale has, however, left an impression sufficiently hideous. You recollect the event, father?"

"Yes, my child," he answered, "I have good reason to recollect it; for I date the gloom of your mother's mind from that night."

"Why, dear father," inquired Inesilla, "have you never told me this before?"

"It has been studiously kept from you, my dear," said Don Andreas. "The buoyancy of your young spirits was delightful to us to see; it would have been worse than madness in us

to have pressed them down with such a history, and I wonder that your mother was so deserted by her usual caution as to tell it to you last night. But enough of this: enjoy the balmy morning, dear child, and think as little as possible of what thou hast heard."

"And you really think, dear father," said Inesilla, "that my mother will not be able to leave her room to-day? If so, I shall go and sit with her, and you must entertain Don Leandro. I cannot help thinking, nevertheless, that it would do her good to see this smiling morning."

"She had better remain where she is, my dear, to-day," replied Don Andreas: but he said nothing about the apparition which Donna Blanca had told him came to her while Inesilla was asleep.

"I tell you what, my dear," said he; "I will go and sit with your mother, and you shall

send my chocolate after me; and then I shall not hurry your breakfast, which I am sure you would like to take with Leandro."

The truth was, he was afraid to leave Donna Blanca, lest she might start out of her sleep with some incoherent horror on her brain; but he chose to disguise his motive.

Inesilla, therefore, having, with fastidious anxiety to appear comely in her lover's eyes, looked at herself two or three times in the glass, and adjusted her boddice again and again, sat down by the casement, and gazed over the landscape to see if Leandro yet approached. 'Twas rather strange, she thought, that he did not come; but perhaps the revels were late, and he had overslept himself. She therefore took a book and endeavoured to while the time away with reading, and had actually gone over four or five pages before it occurred to her that she had not received

one idea from what she read; so she laid the volume aside, and began altering the arrangement of the things on the breakfast-table, till every individual article had changed its position in every possible way, and no farther employment to beguile the time could be obtained from that source. She now looked at her guitar; but her mind began to be a little ruffled, and she had not complacency enough to reach and tune it. So she sat herself once more down by the lattice, and leaned her head into the summer air, and listlessly fixed her eyes first upon a convent, and then upon a Moorish ruin, and then endeavoured to count the number of stone crucifixes which stood within sight; but finding after her enumeration that she had no knowledge of the total number, she began again, without any distinct consciousness of what she was doing; and again she looked at the convent and the

Moorish ruin, and watched the threadings of a stream which arose near the house; or traced the progress of a bee from flower to flower, or the aimless flight of a butterfly; or drew the vine-leaves deeper over the trellis; and many other things upon which a mind in a state of weary suspense endeavours, but in vain, to occupy itself.

The time now flew apace, and still Leandro came not.

"I begin to fear," said she to herself, "that something disastrous has happened to him;" and in the tremour of this idea she thought of her mother's obstinate persuasion that some miserable event was approaching; and her mind, which had hitherto rejected all belief in omens, now submitted to their influence. The gay landscape tired her eye, and she withdrew into the room, where seeing a little drawing of Leandro's hanging by the

wall, she seated herself opposite to it, and wept bitterly.

But in a short time old Beatrice came into the room, and said, "May it please you, Senora, Guzman is below, inquiring if his master's here."

"Guzman here, inquiring for his master?" echoed Inesilla. "Nay, then, my fears are already accomplished;—there has, doubtless, been some accident! Question him, Beatrice, for I dare not. And yet I may as well hear it from his lips as thine. Bid him come hither, Beatrice."

Guzman immediately attended the summons.

"Now, Guzman," said she in a trembling voice, "what is this you say about your master? Is it true that you know not where he is?—Then I will tell you, Guzman. He went last night to visit a certain assembly

some miles off, and you did not attend him;—you did not, Guzman, did you?"

"Yes, Senora, but indeed I did," replied the man; "and I wish to God we had never seen the place."

"There—there," interrupted Inesilla, "do not tell me all at once. I cannot bear it, good Guzman, in one blow. Put on a more cheerful face, for Heaven's sake, and let me hear thy tale by degrees, and as mercifully as thou canst, or my heart will burst here where I sit. Cheat me awhile, my friend, even if it be with vain hopes, and then the worst will come less terribly."

"I don't mean to say that any thing *very* bad has happened, neither," rejoined the man.

"Right, Guzman, right!" exclaimed the poor girl; "I can hear thee now more patiently. Omit nothing—nothing, Guzman; not even the smallest particular; only do not

stun me at once with the worst, for I am ready even now to faint. I will, however, bear up while you go on with your story.—Now!"

"Why, with regard to *every* particular, Senora," replied Guzman, "I don't know how I can in that obey you. I must not forget that I am speaking to a lady—a young lady; and, what 's more—saving your presence—to my master's lady! So you must excuse me if I say simply that I don't know where Don Leandro is."

"Guzman," said Inesilla, "I am not of an inquisitive disposition; and under any other circumstances than those which press upon me now, I should not have put you to the necessity of manifesting your caution; but my present alarm justifies me in urging you to tell me when and where you last saw your master."

"Excuse me, Senora—pray do," answered the man.

"Nay, then," rejoined Inesilla, "I must see if conjectures will not unravel the mystery.—The party was gay, and the wine was too strong for Don Leandro—eh, Guzman?"

"No, Senora," said he.

"No?" echoed the poor girl. "Perhaps, then, he has been lured to the gaming-table, and so has suffered a desperate loss?"

"Nothing of the sort, Senora," he replied.

"You surely would never have left him, Guzman," continued Inesilla with a searching look, "if he had been attacked by banditti?"

"No, Senora, not with life!" said he proudly.

"Speak out at once, then, I charge you!" exclaimed Inesilla in great agitation.

"Well, then, Senora, if I must, I must," replied the man; "though, you know, if any

mischief comes of it, it is not my fault. My master upon his road homewards saw — I can't, for the life of me, bring it out. I'll go and tell Beatrice, if you please, Senora, and then she can break it to you."

"Save yourself the trouble, good Guzman," interrupted Inesilla; "I understand it all now. Your master left you in pursuit of some affair of gallantry—eh, Guzman?"

"Why, yes, Senora, that's it," he answered.

"And is that all?" said the poor girl, breathing again with freedom. "I was afraid, Guzman, that there was some frightful knowledge concealed under your harassed looks. God be thanked that it is nothing worse than what you mention! Your master is at home now, I'll venture to say; and he does not come here, because he is ashamed of being so long after his appointment. Therefore, good Guzman, mount thy horse and gallop home,

and tell Don Leandro that I shall be glad if he will come here *to-day*, instead of to-morrow, as we had appointed. You understand me, Guzman?—And you may say that I have some new drawings to shew him, and a merry tale to tell. But if he should not be at home, go on to where you left him, and deliver the message, which you may say was brought to you by my servant. Do not on any account tell him you have seen me."

"I will go home directly," answered Guzman; "but if I do not find my master there, it will puzzle me, Senora, to fulfil the other part of your command; for I could not find out the place where I left Don Leandro, if my life depended on it."

"You speak in riddles," interrupted Inesilla. If you cannot discover the place again, how did you find your road from it?"

"Why, Senora," said Guzman, "if you can

listen to a long tale, you shall know all." And then he acquainted Inesilla with that which the reader has been already told in the fifth chapter.

"I am destined to be the sport and prey of awful and unnatural stories," thought our sweet girl to herself; and then, addressing Guzman, she asked what ensued upon his being left alone in the void town?

"The rain, Senora," answered Guzman, "brought me to myself; and seeing the porch of a large house near me, I drew the horses within it, and laid myself down to sleep. My fear was drowned in deep drowsiness, so I slept; and when I waked, it was day-light, and there was nothing at all like houses about me. I was stretched under a tree in an open field; and so were the horses, poor things!—I can't, for the life of me, make out how we were removed so snugly in the night, without

being roused: even my cap was under my head exactly as I had put it when I laid down in that strange town. I dare say the horses know how we were got away; but then, poor things, they are nothing but dumb creatures, and can't speak!"

"In what direction lies this empty town?" asked Inesilla.

"Nay, Senora," replied Guzman, "I could not tell you that, if you offered to reward me with all you are worth. I have been travelling this province in all directions, man and boy, for the last thirty years, and I never by chance stumbled upon such a place; nor, what's more, I never once heard any body speak of it. I do not wonder, though, at that; for *I* would give the world not to be obliged to speak of it again: the very thought or bare mention of the subject sets me a-shivering. If I had not been removed away in the night,

I should, nevertheless, have made some landmarks to lead me to the spot again, on account of my poor master, who parted from me there in so strange a manner: and this morning I should have taken Father Lopez with me to the place; and I think, with my sword and the holy Franciscan's prayers, we might have rescued him."

"*Rescued* him?" echoed Inesilla, throbbing piteously. "A *Franciscan*, too, to aid you?—What! you think, then, he is entangled in some sorcery?—Mother, mother! the dreadful woman is come again!—your fears are about to be awfully revealed! Now, indeed, my scorn of supernatural influence is chastised!—O blessed, pure, and holy Virgin! look down and pierce the darkness by which I am surrounded! Strengthen my endeavours to save him who is beguiled, I fear me, by thy great Adversary; for, alas! I am feeble,

and know not what to do, though something must be tried against this wicked enchantment!—Leave me, good Guzman; but yet remain in the house till I have seen thee again—till I have taken counsel of my father. —O Leandro! would I were with thee!"

CHAPTER IX.

> Then down the lord of the castle came,
> The red-cross knight to meet;
> And when the red-cross knight he saw,
> Right loving he did him greet.
>
> OLD BALLAD.

"THIS [illegible] to be the house of Don Andreas de Zavaleta," said a gentleman on horseback to one of the servants standing at the gate. "Is he still living, and does this house continue to be his residence?"

"Yes, Senor," answered the servant.

"Then tell him, if he be at home," continued the gentleman, "that a very old acquaintance of his is just arrived in Spain, and would be glad to see him."

The servant accordingly went into the house on his errand, leaving the stranger looking around him with eyes of eager interest. In a few moments the servant returned, and ushered the gentleman into a room in which Don Andreas was sitting. They saluted each other with formality, and the stranger said:

"You do not appear to know me, Don Andreas; and did I not meet you here in your own family-house, I should be equally slow in recognising you. Time [illegible] strange havoc, which shocks us in our friends, while we do not perceive its effect in ourselves. A meeting after a separation of many years is always a melancholy thing!"

"The sound of your voice," said Don Andreas, "is not altogether strange to me, though it does not furnish me with any distinct recollection. But pray be seated, Senor, and do me the courtesy to tell your name."

The stranger at this disencumbered himself of his cloak, and sat down; and then Don Andreas exclaimed:

"Your knightly array, and the red cross which you bear on your breast, flash a suspicion on my mind. Surely you bring tidings of my brother Sebastian, who, we thought, had long lain in an eastern grave,—if, indeed, thou art not he himself! Speak quickly, I beseech thee, Sir Knight."

And the stranger, opening his arms, cried out, "I am he, Andreas!—even Sebastian, come from toil and captivity in burning Palestine, to my own country and friends!"

Then their greetings were renewed in a cordial embrace; after which Don Sebastian said:

"There is nothing that tries the heart more than these meetings. I am afraid to ask any question,—almost to look around me! Every change, even the most minute, is painful when

we return in age from a foreign land to our own country and its familiar spots. We cling fondly to old associations of ideas, which are cruelly disturbed even by the removal of a tree, or gate, or post, or the silence of an old clock. But there are other changes which wring the heart to come upon in this way, and to receive as news, when, to every one around, they are recollected only as old events! I have found already, in my progress thus far into my native country, that many of my old friends have long been with the dead, and are almost forgotten!—How," continued he, grasping Andreas's hand with suppressed emotion, "how is my sister?"

"I would to God," replied Don Andreas, "that I could give you a good account of her! She is in bed, in a very melancholy state, brought on by a recent alarm; though, indeed, she has never regained her serenity since that

cursed night when we were so beset by supernatural visitations, and you acted so memorable a part. Her mind was then irrecoverably blighted: her very talk has since that time become lofty and melancholy; and last night, being awed by the violence of the tempest, she sat up with her daughter, (our only child, Sebastian,) and she will have it that she was haunted by a fiendish-looking man, who seemed, she said, to exult over her, as if he had achieved some [illegible] ur daughter had fallen asleep at the moment the apparition met your sister's eyes; so that it is impossible to persuade her it was a delusion—of which, indeed, I am not convinced myself; for the other day a strange cavalier appeared and disappeared in a most marvellous way in our garden. These are hideous stories to meet you, Sebastian, on your return to your family."

Don Sebastian was about to make some

observation and inquiries concerning these things, when a tapping was heard at the door, and Inesilla, wan and dejected, entered. She started at sight of Don Sebastian, who was an entire stranger to her; but her father, taking her by the hand, said:

"My daughter, Sebastian;" and then turning to her, "Inesilla, my love," he continued, "this is your uncle Sebastian, of whom you have heard us speak. He is just returned from the perils of the Holy Land. Embrace and welcome him."

"A sweet girl indeed!" exclaimed Don Sebastian: "she must be quite a treasure to you, brother; and a great consolation to my poor sister.—But you tremble, pretty one. What has alarmed you?"

Inesilla here turned her looks towards her father; and Sebastian, who still held her hand, continued:

"Her agitation increases; she is sorely troubled: she looks towards you as if for relief. Take her, Andreas!"

And she dropped into her father's arms, and gave loose to a transport of grief.

"What does all this mean, dear Inesilla?" said he. "For God's sake, do not keep me in suspense! Disasters thicken round me:—you are come, Sebastian, at a woful season.—Quiet thy sobs, and tell me the worst at once, dear child."

"O father!" she replied, "I shall never see Leandro more!" And having uttered this, the torrent of her sorrow came again upon her, and she was unable to articulate farther.

"What has happened to him?" said Don Andreas.

"The goblin-woman is come again!" she exclaimed. And she then told her father all which she had learned of Guzman about the

Assembly, the silent town, and the mysterious lady.

"Now, my dear," said Don Andreas to Inesilla, "leave us awhile; and your uncle and I will confer together as to the best means to be adopted to save Leandro. Your uncle is holy, valiant, and skilled in exorcisms, and will aid us in this drear extremity."

Inesilla, hearing this, threw herself before Don Sebastian, embraced his knees, and, ejaculating "Save him! save him!" departed for her mother's chamber.

"Stay!" exclaimed Don Andreas, calling her back. "Do not mention any thing of this to your mother, my dear girl: it will kill her if you do."

"No, no," she answered, and again left the room.

"Who is this Leandro?" asked Don Sebastian when Inesilla was gone.

"A young cavalier—a gay, noble, frank-hearted youth—who was about to be united to her," Don Andreas replied; and added, "he is the only remaining descendant of the Bonadilla family."

"Ah!" rejoined the other, "then it is likely to be indeed a heavy calamity. I tremble to think of the probable event. Would to God I had arrived sooner!—this danger might have been averted. The woman who encountered this young cavalier at that unhallowed revel is, doubtless, the same creature who appeared to me on the night you have alluded to,—a night which will never pass away from my memory. She, forlorn thing! will be a reluctant agent in any scheme of evil; but the power which impels her is mighty and malevolent, and its diabolical magic must be battled with. Send for the servant: we may find out the situation of the place from him;

and then I will go forth and see what can be done."

Guzman, being sent for, appeared.

"Now, my friend," continued Don Sebastian, "do you think you can conduct me to this town of which you have spoken?"

"I have told my young Lady already, that I have not the least idea where it can possibly be," answered Guzman. "I don't know whether its direction is east, west, north, or south. I can no more find it, Senor, than if I were blindfold."

"It is a grievous circumstance that you cannot," resumed Don Sebastian: "but you will be able, no doubt, to return to the spot where you awoke this morning?"

"Why, yes, Senor," replied Guzman; "I marked the tree at the foot of which I had been sleeping."

"Saddle thy horse, then," continued the

holy knight; "and tell my servant to get his and mine ready. No delay, my friend; we must set forth directly. And now, Andreas, console thy daughter as much as thou canst: tell her I will not quit the search till I have discovered the fate of this unfortunate cavalier. Would I had known it earlier!"

CHAPTER X.

The stony feare
Ran to his heart, and all his sense dismayd;
Ne thenceforth life ne corage did appeare;
But as a man, whom hellish feendes have frayd,
Long trembling still he lay.

SPENSER.

"MAY I not go, dear father, with my uncle?" said Inesilla.

"No, my poor child," he answered; "your wits would be scared with what Don Sebastian must doubtless look at steadfastly. Besides, what assistance could you, with your timid heart, render? A high courage must be exerted, or no good will be done; for the enemies that must be met are fearful; no man can imagine their terribleness."

"And is it among such," she interrupted, "that Leandro is perhaps at this very moment, maddening? I think," continued she in her meek voice, "I think I could encounter any thing for his sake; but be it as you wish! I rely upon my uncle and his holy courage. May God go with and protect him!"

It was past mid-day when the party set out on their spiritual expedition. Don Andreas and his daughter watched them, as they wound among the intricacies of the landscape, till they were out of sight; and then the latter, breaking the interval of silence, said:

"O father! what shall I do *now*?—how occupy the dreadful hours of suspense which are coming on? How shall I sustain myself—how live? Would I had gone with them! for this interval, filled with nothing but my fears, is indeed appalling! I am sick at heart,—

yea, ready even to die, to escape from this insupportable distraction!"

"God requires us to be patient under His visitations," replied her father. "I know we cannot always fulfil His behests; but we may strive, and the mere endeavour will relieve us,—so bountiful is He in rewarding even our attempts to be obedient! Lift thy thoughts, my poor child, to Him who sits above! Thy trial is a heavy one; but He will help thee in thy distress."

The poor girl cast up her eyes to Heaven, and so remained like one entranced. Her father was compelled to take his sad station by the bed of Donna Blanca, but he sent Beatrice into the room to sit with Inesilla.

The sun stooped from the mid-heavens; and, after glowing for awhile in the pomp of his western throne, dropped away, leaving the welkin free to the spreading shades, while all

the time the inmates of this afflicted house were dumb as at midnight.

Don Sebastian and his attendants, after an hour's progress into the country, came to the place where Guzman had found himself in the morning. It was a wide, open spot, and presented no mark or likelihood to induce them to one course more than another. What was to be done? Sebastian paused a minute or two in earnest consideration, and then "Guzman," said he, "is there any forest hereabouts?"

"There is a wood," the man answered, "two miles from hence. No one goes much beyond the skirts of it, and so it has grown dark and tangled, and, they say, breeds hordes of deadly reptiles."

"We must penetrate that wood, Guzman," said the holy knight. "Recollect, the object of our search is to succour your master: we must trample over all obstacles in our endea-

vour; though, at the same time, no means for our own preservation shall be neglected. Above all, we must implore the grace of God upon our undertaking."

Here he made them kneel, while he uttered a fervent prayer to the Most High; and then, rising, he told Guzman to lead on.

They soon arrived at the edge of a thick grove,—a gloomy, solitary place. Here they dismounted, and, leading their horses a little way in, tied their bridles to some trees, and proceeded on foot. They had not got far before the intricate entanglement of the overgrowth, and the deep, dank, slimy weeds, threatened to stop their progress; but Sebastian, who led the way, sundered the twisted boughs with his sword, and the two men following his example, a passage was with much labour cut out. The noise of their hacking drew about them many loathsome things, which

they had to destroy or intimidate as they went, —adders, toads, lizards, and other creeping reptiles; with flights of baleful birds, among which the vampire-bat flapped its skeleton wings incessantly in their faces. After a time they came to a narrow opening, into which they advanced, and pursued its course for nearly a mile. The shades of evening were now beginning to descend, and the wildness and secrecy of the place seemed more and more awful. They, nevertheless, continued their silent course, encouraged by Sebastian, and at length were stopped in a little darksome space; where, looking about him, Sebastian saw some one lying on the ground; at whose head he could just discern, by the fading light, a grisly creature, with a tawny shrivelled skin, and hands and feet like birds' claws. He seemed to be watching the eyes of the man who lay upon the ground; and, when

they opened, he stared into them with his hideous face, whispering some words, at which the poor suffering creature shook his head, as if in denial, and heaved ever and anon a heavy groan.

Sebastian, seeing this, crept forward with noiseless pace, and concealed himself behind the bulk of an old oak, to which hiding-place he beckoned Guzman, and, bidding him look on the ground, asked if he whom he saw there was his master?

The man, stammering with terror, said, "I do not see the face perfectly; but I cannot think that that is Don Leandro. He was very differently clothed when he left me;—those are garments of a strange fashion."

"There is some damnable device here, be the sufferer who he may," said Don Sebastian; and then springing forth from his concealment, and elevating his voice, cried out:

"Avaunt, imp of hell! Cease thy devilish work on that forlorn wretch!"

And as he spake, lo! the trees seemed individually instinct with life; for from every one of them there started out an ugly shape—a multitude of deformed things! They were armed with weapons never before beheld of mortal man; and, thronging round and about Don Sebastian and his companions, they stared at them with frightful eyes, and threatened death!

The two men startled the desolate silence of the place with their shrieks, and would have fled in the sudden panic; but Don Sebastian, smiling at the malice of the fiends, exclaimed:

"If you were to play your hell-antics for ever, you would not move me! You see I change not for all your terrors!—Will you still persist?—These trembling men must not encourage you! It is *I* whom you must work

upon, before you can resume your torment on that prostrate victim!—Come all at once upon *me!* Behold!" continued he, holding forth the cross, "this is my defence!—Come on!"

The hateful crew looked at the cross, and seemed suddenly transfixed, each in his several attitude. The flashing of their eyes faded into a stony glare; and Don Sebastian again cried out, with a steadfast voice:

"Avaunt, execrable phantoms—hell fragments! In the name of the holy God whom I serve, Avaunt!"

And, behold! the miserable things were gone! The air was troubled awhile with the clangour of their departing wings; but silence soon brooded again over the recess, and it was now occupied of none but Sebastian, the two servants, and the forlorn man, who still lay upon the ground, motionless and exhausted.

Sebastian, going to him, lifted his head,

which had fallen on one side; and Guzman, coming up, exclaimed:

"Yes, Senor, now I see him better, it is indeed my master; but, O! how changed, how deathlike he looks!"

"Rend some branches down quickly, and make a litter," said Don Sebastian. "We must bear him hence: he needs human comfort—though, alas! I fear me it is too late!"

Leandro heard nothing of all this; he did not even feel their hands when they lifted him on the litter, and seemed, moreover, utterly unconscious of the motion, as, with irregular and uneasy impulse, they pushed through the thorny obstacles of the wood. Don Sebastian mounted his horse, and led the other two by the bridles; while the sad procession, moving in slow paces like a funeral, proceeded towards the house of Don Andreas. Night now came on, and part of their returning journey

was travelled in pitch darkness; but before they reached their destination, the moon floated over the brim of the horizon; and Inesilla, seated at the lattice, from whence she had looked for Leandro's morning approach, saw them come in this doleful sort, and screamed out:

"They have found him! Him?—his *body!* O God! it was too late: his corpse is stretched on that terrible litter!—Father! mother! hear me, for I speak almost my last words;—Leandro, dead Leandro, is come!"

And in this way she ran about the house raving.

CHAPTER XI.

Marian. Are you awake, dear lady?
Amelia. Wide awake.
There are the stars abroad, I see.—I feel
As though I had been sleeping many a day.
What time o' the night is it?
Mar. About the stroke
Of midnight.
Amel. Let it come. The skies are calm
And bright; and so, at last, my spirit is.
* * * * * * *
* * * Ne'er did my soul
Look upwards with such hope of joy, or pine
For that hope's deep completion. Marian
Let me see more of Heaven. There—enough.

BARRY CORNWALL.

THE sounds of the distracted girl's voice penetrated her mother's chamber. It might be supposed that ejaculations so loud and terrible would have thrown Donna Blanca into

a paroxysm of anguish, worse even than that which had tormented her so in the morning when she saw the apparition, and summoned her husband with frantic cries to her side. She had lain the whole day in a state of torpor, not stirring even with the slightest motion, or giving any sign of life otherwise than by a faint breathing. Don Andreas had been with her for some time; but on seeing Sebastian and his party approach the house with their miserable burden, he called Beatrice to her mistress's room, and left it himself, that he might soothe the despair of his daughter. Beatrice, therefore, took her station by Donna Blanca's bed-side, trembling from head to foot with fear of the consequences which these piercing shrieks might have on her. It was a vain fear. The sounds did, indeed, rouse her from her apparent insensibility; but, instead of a distracted aspect when she awoke,

her eyes, on opening, beamed with an expression of serenity which had not been seen in her countenance for years. She looked around her, and, seeing Beatrice, said in a voice of entire composure:

"Beatrice, you must rejoice with me. I am no longer afflicted as I have been. The veil which wrapped my soul for so weary a space, has passed away. I have had a blessed vision: but it is not for myself alone that I am thus exceedingly comforted. My child, my poor child! I hear thy wail. I hear the sobs that convulse thee, Inesilla!—Ah! Beatrice, you look pale, and shudder at my daughter's dismay. It is, indeed, full of torture to her; but she little thinks that her pangs will be but short, and that she is suffering them even within touch of the gates of eternal bliss, which will speedily open, with their calm sphere-like sound, to her and that now tor-

mented youth. How could I bear her shrieks, had I not been assured of this?—I foreknew, in my dream, what has now come to pass; and the loud lament of my precious one reaches my ears as an echo of a passed sound, and is a token and a sign that all shall be fulfilled which has this day been revealed to me.—The power of our arch enemy is over! There has been a trial and a triumph—a holy triumph, Beatrice, purchased by the daring and the vast agony of one who has long toiled to free herself from the power of Hell! Her reward will come. Hush! all is now quiet: the end is fast approaching."

She ceased speaking audibly, but her lips continued to move in whispers; and it was plain, by the upward intentness of her eyes and the position of her hands, which were pressed palm to palm and pointed from her breast, that she was praying. The rays of the

moon (for the curtains of her chamber had been drawn aside by her desire) fell on her body as she lay, in a white and spiritual gleam. She looked saint-like—entranced—glorified! Beatrice did not move; nay, she suppressed her very breathing, for fear of disturbing so ecstatic a devotion; and, with the exception of a cautious footstep, heard passing every now and then to and from the chamber where they had taken Leandro, the silence all around was deep as that of a windless night in a great solitude.

After remaining for some time in this sacred occupation, she sighed happily, as one who descends to familiar thoughts from a fit of lofty abstraction, and expressed a wish to see her husband, who, on hearing it, repaired immediately to her side.

"Andreas," said she, "dear Andreas, I have passed the last few hours in beatitude—yea,

in sight of Heaven! Many strange things have been shadowed out to me, as in a vision, and I am comforted. Behold! the glooms and fantasies which have been my unchanging shadow are gone! You droop your head, and your looks labour with the load of some untold misery. I know what you would say to me—I know it all. You would tell me that I have greater cause now than ever to wail—that our child is distracted, and that Leandro is almost dead. You see I already know this. —Do not turn with those reproving looks upon Beatrice:—she, poor woman! has not uttered a syllable since she has been in this room. No; my knowledge is vouchsafed to me from high! My brother has returned from his long captivity in Palestine; let me see him!"

Sebastian, who had stolen into the room when Andreas was summoned, and who had stood there unperceived, on hearing this came

forward and wept aloud, and kissed the faded cheek of his sister.

"Weep not!" she exclaimed; "lift up your voice and give thanks; for joys of amaranthine bloom are spreading for us in the repose of eternity! Lo! the despair of our seeing each other again on earth was vain. Why should we weep? Thou art here once more, and comest to aid, as thou *hast* done, in the unutterable sequel of thy former righteous daring. The Spirit of the Almighty has manifested itself to me—to *me*, Sebastian: hearest thou *that*?—Look not pale at my discourse, I beseech ye; but draw near and listen. I am sane."

Beatrice now left the room, and was ordered by her master to let no one approach it. Donna Blanca resumed:

"I slept, but my soul went forth from this chamber. Methought it was a Sunday morn-

ing. All Nature seemed observing its sabbath, for silence brooded with devout awe over the earth. Sebastian was with us, and on the night before had rescued poor Leandro from the ghastly snares of the Evil One; though, as it was shewn to me, the temptation the young man had undergone had well nigh consumed him. My darling girl languished even unto death, with sorrow at his sore dismay: but we thought that if, in this halcyon day of worship, they could be taken to the temple of the Lord, they would there be sanctified and refreshed. We went accordingly to church, and were soon buried in deep devotion. Leandro and our child, though still faint, seemed consoled, even as if their prayers had been accepted; and having besought and received our benedictions, they went to the altar, to be united in the sight of God. The bridal ceremony was completed, and the chant

of the choir went ringing and ringing upwards through the smooth ether.

"Suddenly the earth quaked. We were terrified, and looked out of the gates of the chancel, to see what thing might happen; and, behold! down the long vista of the aisles, a woman, in penitential robes, approached. She seemed possessed, and looked like a prophetess;—but it was the intolerable spasms of terror that gave her that inspired appearance. Still she came along the aisle; and reaching the chancel, where we stood, she faltered over the threshold, and then fell with her face upon the ground, weeping and sore abashed, and crying out, in an utterance which seemed to break through the folds of suffocation, 'God! God! hear me! hear me! I have done what I thought would be acceptable in thy sight.'

"Presently a shape ——" Donna Blanca

stopt a moment or two, and then said, "Now, Andreas, you shall be assured that the weight of my soul has been taken off, when you see I can speak of such things and keep my natural voice.—Presently the Fiend—the Arch-Fiend—yea, the Prince of Hell, peered in at the outer door, and threw a twilight over the whole building, which had been glowing, an instant before, under the mid-day sun. On he came expanding down the pillared avenue, in pursuit of that shuddering fugitive who had just darted, in frightful agony, to the altar: but as he touched the threshold of the innermost sanctuary, he suddenly staggered backwards, as though in his speed he had jarred against some huge obstacle; and the ground between us and him heaved, and then, with mighty revulsion, sank; disclosing a great chasm, where the eye gazed down, down, down, until depth became eternity. The de-

testable spectre looked at this, and knew it for his living grave; for, after struggling awhile in vain with some unseen influence, he plunged into the gulph, uttering groans and imprecations, and vanished in the oblivion of distance.

"The abyss closed; the sun looked cheerfully through the windows of the lofty church; the sabbath-serenity came again; but the exhausted fugitive still clung to the altar. At length she ventured to look around; and seeing our daughter and her newly-married husband, she tottered towards them, and, gazing in their faces, saw they were still pale from the past excess of their suffering; at which she wept aloud, embracing them with trembling arms and incoherent murmuring, till she fainted away at their feet. Oh! what a piteous thing it was to see her swooning, and then again to hear her humble voice in timo-

rous prayer! Her eyes were downcast as she said, 'Not for myself, O Lord! not for myself, but for these two children ——'

"We heard no more of the supplication, which her utterance, being so broken, could not sustain audibly; but anon the voice of an angel thrilled from above, saying: 'THEY WILL SOON BE HERE. THOU ART SAVED!'

"The church trembled at the presence of that voice, awful in its beauty; the roof opened, and, lo! the depths of Heaven were disclosed. Cherubim and seraphim were there in blazing splendour; and their hymning would have been more than mortal ear could have borne, had it not been allayed by the mild voices of the saints who had sprung to Heaven through the pangs of martyrdom, and who were now joining in the everlasting adoration. Methought, Andreas, that you and I, and Sebastian, joined hands and prostrated ourselves

before the ineffable brightness; and as we ventured to look, behold! the angel who hovered in the mid-air descended, and, touching our children, began to reascend, taking them with him, together with the woman, who still clung to them, and of whom we seemed to have, on the sudden, an imperfect recognition. They floated upwards, and became obscured in intolerable light: the roof of the church then closed again, and we remained praying.

"This was my dream. But even a few minutes since, while I thanked God for this vision, the courts of eternity were shewn to me again; and I saw our children there, who smiled down upon me. The unknown was with them; but she still bare about her some faint relics of her long agony.

"Such was the second revelation; and the beatitude thus promised shall assuredly come to pass for them—yea, and for us who shall

survive them. Let us adore the ever-merciful Creator!"

She ceased; and Sebastian, kneeling with Andreas, lifted up his voice and magnified the Lord.

CHAPTER XII.

Seest thou this object?

* * * * *

Even so.—Cover their faces!

SHAKSPEARE.

RETURN we now to earth, and earthly sorrow. The party and their unhappy burden, which we left, at the end of the tenth chapter, approaching the window where poor Inesilla sat watching, were met at the gates by Don Andreas, holding back his frantic girl, who was wailing in unintelligible sounds, and tearing her hair, and struggling forwards towards the litter.

"Stop your daughter's cries," said Don Sebastian. "Leandro is not dead!"

"Not dead?" echoed Inesilla. "Do you hear *that*, father?—God be praised for ever and ever! *Now* you will not hold me back, I am sure."

The poor girl subdued her frenzy with sudden effort, went tenderly to the litter, stooped her head upon the face of Leandro, and said: "It is I; Inesilla, thy love. Look up, Leandro."

At that sound Leandro lifted his faint eyes towards her; and, after a wild gaze of a moment or so, the glimmering of perception which he seemed to have had, went away, and, sighing, he relapsed into insensibility.

"Carry him up-stairs, I pray you," said she. "My room is ready: lay him on my bed."

They were glad to catch at any thing to give her a little relief. It was evident Leandro was not long for this world; so they did as

she desired, and took him to her room; where having laid him on the bed, Guzman and old Beatrice took off the strange clothes which he had on, and burnt them by direction of Don Sebastian. Restoratives were then administered to him, and he seemed to gain a little strength. Inesilla now went to the room. The night was far advanced—it was in its "dead waist:" the wind came, in short moaning gusts, softly against the casement.

Inesilla went to the bed-side.

"Leandro," said she, "do you not know me? I am Inesilla."

He gazed at her with an expression of mingled gloom and pleasure, and said:

"I would thou wert! But still I will look at thee, thou gentle shadow, as long as I am able.—From whence did the afflicted creature send thee? I thank her for it.—Has she, then, time to think of my solace in her tor-

ture? Poor soul! she loves me indeed!—But where are the fiends? when will they come again? I shall be out of their power soon; I feel they cannot torture me much more."

"Hush! hush!" she exclaimed in her sweet voice; "pacify the terrors of thy brain in my arms. No one loves thee like Inesilla!"

She accordingly leant over him, smoothed the tangled hair on his forehead, and kissed him with her soft lips.

"What!" he said, "can visions counterfeit touch and substance? I shall now die happily!"

"Alas!" she returned, "dismiss these dreadful thoughts, if you do not wish to kill me.—I am Inesilla; and you are in my room—on my bed. Look about thee, dear Leandro!—see, the wainscot is pannelled with thine own Arcadian paintings; and here is the little ivory

casket, so precious to me because you, Leandro, brought it: and this," continued she, unclasping some jewels from her bosom, "is your favourite necklace, which I had put on this morning, expecting——Pshaw! I had forgotten—Think no more of shadows!—Look! here is old Beatrice, with whom you used to make so merry; and Guzman is below: and this is my father's house.—Be comforted, my love!"

"Is that a crucifix which I see on the table?" he inquired; "for, alas! my eyes are covered with film, and I see but imperfectly."

"Yes, it is my crucifix; and those eastern casements, through which the moon now comes with a holy light, are the same from whence I have so often looked down on you, dear Leandro, while you sang love-songs to me in the early days of our love."

These words seemed to convince him: he burst into tears, and, after a time, said:

"I am happier now. O, Inesilla!—for I think thou art she indeed,—I have suffered dreadfully; but I have been a guilty man."

"No, no," she interrupted; "we know all. —*Guilty?* You have been in snares which were too strong for any one. Cease to brood over it: think now of home and me and love. I tell thee, Leandro, the dark spirits thou speakest of are quelled: thou art saved!"

"My soul is saved—*that* I feel," said he; "but they have withered the mortal life-springs in me. O, Inesilla! I have seen a terrible shadow—a tremendous shape, which breathed on me, and I cannot live!—Have they told thee about the woman? She was a heart-broken thing, though supernatural. She loves *thee*, Inesilla, and me; and was once human. This is a great mystery, but I believe it; for she has plunged herself into torments

to save me. But how was I got away to this sweet haven—this human abode?"

"Rest yourself, dear Leandro," she replied; "you shall know all in time. Sleep, if you can, while I sit by your side. Oh! if you knew my happiness to have you once more near me!—But, alas! your faintness is coming again. There—the pillow is beneath your head."

He sank on it, and remained quiet; while she, with anxious solicitude, sat watching the changes of his countenance, which were many and fearful. It went into strange resemblances, and at last settled into a look totally unlike himself—an hippocratical visage!

Oh! what was then the agony of the poor girl! Her heart sank within her; she almost ceased to breathe: her thoughts were only that she would die with him.

A little before dawn he opened his eyes, and said faintly:

"Art thou there, Inesilla? Let me hear thy voice, for, alas! my eyes are very weak, and cannot bear to look long on any thing. Remove that taper, I pray thee, my love; it troubles me."

She drew a shade over the faint light, and returned to him; and he continued:

"Give me thy hand: the mystery, the terror, and the suffering, have killed me: try if thou canst lift me up—I shall breathe better. Turn my head to the cross.—Ah! I feel worse than before: drop me again—I shall be strangled!—O my love! O Inesilla!—But fear not; it is only exhaustion. There!——"

Andreas and Sebastian were together during this time, as the reader has been told, in the

solemn chamber of Donna Blanca. Sebastian, when his prayer was done, briefly told his brother the ghastly situation in which he had found the young cavalier; and it was by his advice that he and Inesilla were left so long alone. Andreas at length said:

"Our cares must not be confined here wholly. We had better now, I think, send Beatrice to Inesilla's room. Poor girl! her vigil, I fear me, has been a heart-breaking one. Beatrice," he continued, calling her, "I have told you to go every now and then to your young mistress's room. Go in once more, and bring us word how Don Leandro is, and whether he sleeps or not."

Beatrice soon returned, and said in a low whisper:

"Senors, I pray you come yourselves into my young lady's room. It is so silent and

dark, that I think something must have hap pened."

They immediately repaired there, and withdrew the casement-curtains, that they might see more clearly. The sun, though not visible, had already flushed the eastern horizon; and, by this morning light, they saw Leandro stretched out dead upon the couch, and Inesilla leaning across him, with her face towards the bed, and one of her arms under his body.

They turned her face round: it was cold—she was gone!

"Leave this awful chamber, my brother," said Don Sebastian in a solemn voice. "Thou art now childless! Ay, give way to thy grief; but yet, as thou mournest, think of the vision of thy wife! Go to her; do not fear to tell her of this event: she is strength-

ened to bear it. I will remain here, and close the eyes of the departed.—Heart-broken things! your sharp troubles are past, and you are even now soaring upwards to the joys of immortality!"

THE CONVICT.

THE CONVICT.

Look, if excess of sweetness has not done
The work o' the scaffold!

ANON.

ROBERT WILSON was a market-gardener. Early in life he married a deserving young woman, whom he loved with entire tenderness, and by whom he had several children. No man on earth could be fonder of his little offspring than Wilson; and they, on the other hand, almost worshipped their father, taking delight in nothing so much as in doing what he wished. Wilson was not very wise, nor was

he at all learned; but his heart, which, as I have said, was full of tenderness, told him with unerring instinct, that his children would be governed more perfectly, and with more wholesome effect, under the dominion of love, than under that of fear; and *his* was indeed a happy family, where affection, pleasure, obedience, and faith in each other went hand in hand. Wilson was well situated for passing his life comfortably and rationally, his garden being just far enough out of London to render inconvenient his mixing in the squalid profligacies of town (had he been so inclined); and yet he was not so entirely in the country, as to harden him into the robust callousness and ignorant vices of village life. He could just hear enough of the "stir of the great Babel" to interest him in it, and to keep his faculties alive and awake to the value of his own quiet, and to the unaffected caresses of

his wife and children, which always appeared more and more precious after he had been hearing, in his weekly visits to town, some instance of mercenary hypocrisy and false-heartedness.

I formerly lodged in his house, and have often seen him, on a summer's evening, sitting in an open part of his garden, surrounded by his family, in unconscious enjoyment of the still and rich sun-set. I was his guest the last time I saw him, poor fellow! in this placid happiness. We drank tea in the open air, and amused ourselves afterwards, I recollect, with reading the preceding day's newspaper, which Wilson used to hire for the evening. We sate out of doors later than usual owing to the deliciousness of the night, which, instead of deepening into darkness, kept up a mellow golden radiance sweeter than the searching day-light; for before the colours of the

sun had entirely faded in the west, the moon came up over the eastern horizon, and the effect was divine. My poor host, however, did not seem so happy as usual. He had been thoughtful the whole evening, and now became more pensive; and nothing roused him even into momentary cheer, except the playfulness of his eldest daughter,—a merry little girl of about four or five years of age. It was sad to see him, with his dejected face, striving to laugh and romp with the child, who in a short time began to perceive the alteration in her father's manner, and to reflect in her smooth face the uneasiness of his. But their pastime was of short continuance. It was melancholy pretence. There was nothing hearty in it, except the dance of the child's forehead-locks tossed to and fro in the clear moonshine.

I soon found out the cause of this depression. He was beginning to be pinched under an ugly

coalition—an increasing family, decreasing business, and times taxed to the uttermost. The gentry living about the great squares did not spend so much money as formerly in decking their windows and balconies with early flowers and rare exotics; and this was an important source of Wilson's revenue. He bore up, however, with sad patience, for a long time; till hunger thinned and stretched the round faces of his children; and his wife's endearments, instead of coming with hope and encouragement, seemed like tokens of love growing more spiritual and devoted under despair; they were embraces hallowed and made sublime by famine. All this was more than the poor man could bear. The failing voices of his children, who, unconscious of the real cause of their suffering, used to beseech him for bread when he came home, saying, "Let us have something to eat

now, for we have been very good all day, dear father," were like madness-bringing sounds in his ears; and one night, losing in the tumult of his thoughts the power of distinction between right and wrong, he rushed forth and committed a robbery.

He was not absent long, and returned, as I have been told, in a delirium of joy which was fearful to see. He danced, shouted, sang, and threw money on the table, crying out, "There! we will have plenty of bread now, and meat too. Ah! little ones, you need not stare so gravely at me with those curious fixed eyes. Laugh, my chicks, and rejoice; for what I say is true—true that we will eat. Here, wife, go and get them plenty: they must not look so pale any longer. And, that's a good creature, bring me in some brandy. I am not hungry. Ask no questions, if you love me; but

run, and get food for yourself and the children. We 'll all be merry. Betsy, my child, come and kiss me."

But, alas! in a day or two he fell from this temporary elevation, and the want returned stronger, fiercer, more hopeless. He had done no good to his family, but had burdened himself with a crime. It was deplorable to see him mope about the weedy walks of his garden.

I shall never forget, as long as I live, the hour when he was apprehended by the officers of justice.

A knock was heard at the outer gate, and on Mrs. Wilson's going to open it, two men rushed by her into the house and seized her pale and trembling husband; who, although he expected and dreaded such an event, was so staggered by it as to lose for a few moments his consciousness of all about him. The first thing he saw, on coming to himself, was his wife stretch-

ed at his feet in a fearful swoon; and, as he was hurried off, he turned his eyes towards her with a heart-broken expression, calling out in a tone half raving and half imploring, "Look there, look there!"

It would be vain to attempt a description of the wretched hours passed by him and his wife in the interval which elapsed between this period and the time of his trial. The madness of his utter despair was, perhaps, less intolerable than the sickening agitation produced in her mind by the air-built hopes she dared to entertain in weary succession, and which were only born to be soon stricken back into nothing. This is indeed a ghastly and withering conflict. The poor woman, after enduring it for three weeks, could not be easily recognized by her old acquaintances. There were no traces left of the happy, bustling wife. She moved silently among her children; her face was emaciated

and hectic; and her eyes were red with the constant swell of tears. It was a mighty change.

The day of trial at length came on. Wilson was found guilty, and sentence of death was passed on him. The laws in their justice condemned him to be hanged; and the laws in their justice had enforced the taxation, the hard pressure of which had so mainly assisted to drive him into the crime. But the world is inexplicable.

His wife did not survive this news many hours. She died in the night without a struggle. It was of no use to let the condemned man know this. I knew he would never ask to see her again; for their meetings in the prison had already been torturing beyond endurance.

I visited him in his cell two days before the time appointed for his execution. He was silent for many minutes after I entered, and I

did not attempt to rouse him. At length, with a voice quivering under an effort to be composed, he said: "Although, Mr. Saville, I do not request (I was going to say I did not *wish*, but God knows how false that would be) to behold my wife again in this bitter, bitter world, because such a dreary meeting would drive her mad; yet I think it would do me good if I could see my child, my eldest child, my little Betsy. I know not why it is, but I have an idea that her soft prattle, ignorant as she is of my fate, would take something away from the dismal suffering I am to undergo on Wednesday. Therefore bring her, will you, this afternoon; and frame some postponing excuse for my poor wife. These, dear Sir, are melancholy troubles, but I know you are very good."

In the afternoon, accordingly, I took the child, who asked me several times on the road why her father did not come home. As we

walked along the gloomy passages to his cell, she clung close to me, and did not say a word. It was very different, poor thing! to the open and gay garden about which she was used to run.

The door of her father's miserable dungeon was soon opened, and the child rushed into his arms. "I do not like you to live in this dark place, father," she cried; "come home with me and Mr. Saville, and see mother, who is in bed."

"I cannot come just now, my child," he answered; "you must stay a little with me, and throw your arms round my neck, and lean your face on mine."

The child did as she was bidden; and the poor man, straining her to him, sobbed bitterly and convulsively. After a few minutes, he looked with yearning eyes in her face, saying, "Come, my dear, sing your poor father that

pretty song which you know you used to sing to him when he was tired on an evening. I am not well now. Look at me, my child, and sing."

How sad it was to hear the child's voice warbling to her father in that dolorous place! She was sitting on his knee; returning his eager gaze with a half-perplexed expression; little thinking, poor thing! how soon he was to be snatched away and hung by the neck, like a dog, till he was dead! I could scarcely bear it; but it seemed to have a contrary effect on Wilson. His eyes were lighted up, and a smile appeared on his countenance. The song* was of love and woody retirement, and domestic repose, and the baffled frowns of fortune. While the child was singing, I left the cell to make some arrangements with the gaoler, who was walking close to the door. I had not, however, been thus engaged five

* "In my cottage near a wood."

minutes, before I heard something fall heavily, accompanied by a violent scream; and rushing into the cell, I saw the unhappy convict lying on the floor, and his little girl clinging round his neck. The gaoler and I lifted him up, and, alarmed at the hue of his face, called in the medical attendant of the prison, who soon told us the poor man was dead.

The account given by the child was, that after she had done singing, her father started, then looked sharply in her face, and, with a strange and short laugh, fell from his chair. I suppose she had sung him into a temporary forgetfulness of his situation; that she had conjured into his mind, with her innocent voice, a blessed dream of past days and enjoyments; and that the spell ceasing when her melody ceased, the truth of things had beat again upon his heart with too stunning a contrast, and it had burst.

THE DISINTERMENT.

THE DISINTERMENT

> My late espoused saint
> Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave,
> * * * * * * *
> Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
>
> MILTON

On a fine morning in the month of June, 1798, a funeral procession issued from the park-gates of Woodley Hall, in the county of Gloucester. It was a holiday, a silent one, in the neighbouring village. A stately burial pageant, with its pomp and circumstance, its plumed hearse, black steeds, solemn escutcheons, mourning-coaches, and scarfed mutes pacing by the horses' sides, formed too attractive a sight, especially in a country place, for any one to think of their common daily

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occupations. The poor inhabitants, therefore, were all on the spot. They had been there about ten days before to see and assist in a display of a different kind; and other feelings than curiosity and the love of *a sight* drew them there now. They yearned to pay their last sad testimony of respect and affection to one who had been endeared to them by many acts of benevolence: they were following to its cold home the corpse of their benefactress, Eliza, wife of Sir William Fanshaw.

Never was there a lovelier summer-day than the one appointed for this dismal ceremony. Soft airs were abroad, laden with the odour of flowers; the trees looked proudly in the lustiness of their young green; the deep blue of the sky was unspotted by a single cloud; and the sun shot out his sultry strength, making the birds wanton and noisy with the exuberance of their joy.

Alas! what was all this glory of Nature to the dark company who were moving along the road, thinking of the tomb, and the premature death of that young, beautiful, and virtuous one whom they were conveying thither? How could they enjoy the quick carols of the birds, when the death-bell, gaining in strength as they proceeded, smote their ears and startled their secret sorrowing with its measured and obstinate recurrence? The glad colour of the grass and of the leaves was not in harmony with their mourning garments: there was no comfort in the salutation of the mild winds; and the vital sun could scarcely be rejoiced in, shining as it did on their tears, and on that dark, slow-moving hearse.

The service for the burial of the dead is not easily endured even by an unconnected auditor, so oppressive is the obscure and gloomy imagination in which it is written. What, then,

must our mourners have felt (their loss being unexpected and sorely afflicting), when the priest, meeting the dull coffin at the church-porch, walked on before it, doling out, in a half chaunt, his solemn words? Then the agony of grief burst forth in sobs and hysterics; and then the dreary thought arose that there was nothing but corruption and mortification in the world.

But we are slaves of circumstances; for these ideas, which seemed to lie down immoveably in despair, were soon lifted, on the swell of the organ's sounds, into sweet though mournful aspirations; and the cottagers, who had hovered after the train, and who stood moodily in the church-yard while the silence within continued, were also relieved by the anthem, and blessed it as it trembled out into the sunny air.

Sir William Fanshaw had been married only

one year. He fairly doted on his young wife, and he had reason to do so, for a sweeter, gentler creature never existed. She was lovely in mind and body, (an unwonted union,) and had given up her many charms to him out of a fondness as great as his for her.

The first anniversary of their wedding was celebrated by a day's revel,—a day, I had almost said, of mad pleasure, for the joy was excessive, and the month was June. Bells and early shouts welcomed the morning; the country lads, as the song says, "were dressed in their Sunday clothes," and the damsels were all in their best *be-seen*, flaunting away in blue gowns, yellow kerchiefs, gaudy nosegays, and scarlet-trimmed bonnets. They were all feasted in the park, and, before mid-day, became clamorous in their merriment: "tipsy dance and jollity," and boisterous love-making, filled the trim shades with

noise; and as the day declined, a banquet was provided in the mansion for the visiters of quality. At night, when the peasantry, conquered by drink and the fatigue of a long day's jollification, retreated to their beds, the ancient silence of the park, which had resumed itself in a brief interval, was again startled, but more gently, by the sounds of refined music, and the stir of a masked-ball on the lawn. The ladies, in the full display of their accomplishments, looked more seducing than ever under the illuminated leaves; the gentlemen were proportionably gallant; and it is, therefore, no wonder that they danced far into the morning, even until they were lighted by the sun.

It was altogether a fatiguing business; but so it is with young people, they think pleasure is not pleasure till it becomes toil. The last dance was languidly performed. Lady Fan-

shaw, who had exerted herself greatly the whole day, began now to look weary and overcome. This did not escape the notice of her husband, who was, therefore, less surprised when, as the party were refreshing themselves with coffee in the cool morning, she suddenly whispered to him, "Take me into the house—I faint."

She was conveyed to her chamber, and it was thought that a day's rest would have recovered her; but she continued ill—alarmingly so. On the third day, she begged her husband to bring her the gold chain and locket enclosing his hair, which he had given her before their marriage. This she hung round her neck, and solaced her weary and painful hours with contemplating it, and recalling to her mind many sweet circumstances of their early courtship. In the evening she beckoned Sir William, who was sitting in the chamber,

to her side, and said: "Reach me your hand, my dear husband: I am growing much worse; I feel a perilous sinking in my frame, and death is in my thoughts. If this be nothing more than womanly timidity, bear with it, dearest, for my sake, and give me courage by staying by my side through the night."

"Be comforted, my love," replied her husband; "this weakness is common enough. It is the debility brought on by over-excitement on the day of that inordinate revel. You will be better in the morning; and, in the mean time, I shall not stir from your bed. You will talk to me in a different manner, when, after you have had a good sleep, I shall shew you the cheerful sun-light stealing on the dawn. I see, even now, your eyes are closing; compose yourself, therefore, dear one, and sleep."

The chamber was hushed; the patient lay still, and seemed in so profound a repose, that

her breathing was not heard. The curtains were softly adjusted round her bed; and her husband, happy and full of favourable omens in the idea that she had at length a remission of pain, took a book, and, fixing as much attention on it as he could command, wore the night-hours away. Every thing within and without continued in deep stillness, broken only towards dawn by the pleasant sounds of awakening Nature, which might be heard in so removed a place: the shrill birds, the wheeling hum of the bees darting from their hives in the garden below, and the leaves dallying with the morning's breath. These, together with the strong white lines which intersected the shutters, admonished Sir William and the nurse of the time their patient had slept. The light was, therefore, admitted into the room, and they looked into the bed.

"How is this?" exclaimed Sir William.

"She has not moved a hair's-breadth since we saw her last night. Good God! how pale her face and lips are! Heaven grant all may be well!—but I tremble under my fears. Go instantly, and bring the physician."

The physician came: he was alarmed at her appearance; a feather was placed on her lips, and Sir William bent with keen eyes over it. It did not move. Alas! alas! her spirit had passed away, while her husband, sitting close to her, was congratulating himself on the prospect of her recovery!

She *must* have stirred once in the night, though it was done with such gentleness as not to be perceived; for one of her hands was found inside her garment pressing the locket, of which I have spoken, on her naked breast.

Let no one attempt to describe the swelling of her husband's heart, and the gush of his tears, when this touching instance of her love

was made known to him. His soul brooded over it night and day. He saw in her action the wish she had not strength to utter in words; and determining it should not be violated, he gave directions that she should be placed in her coffin without disturbing the locket or her hand; and having seen this fulfilled, the heart-broken man took his last gaze at his wife's dead countenance, and hid himself in the solitude of his own room.

It will readily be imagined, that so affecting a circumstance as this final manifestation of love by the deceased could not escape being much talked of; and, as in these cases no particulars are ever omitted, the value of the trinket, which was set round with brilliants, found a place in the story.

Now the sexton of the church which contained the family vault was one of the persons to whom this anecdote became known. It

fairly haunted his mind; he shed tears so plentifully when he told the story, that at length his veneration was washed clean away: cupidity took its place, and after a day or two he mentioned the circumstance no more. He gradually began not to comprehend the sentiment which ordained those love-tokens to lie in hallowed immoveability on a dead breast; and he was not long in conceiving a plan by which he might possess himself of the buried jewels, which glittered so temptingly in his mind's eye. I do not think he would have meditated a common theft—a theft capable of injuring any living creature; nay, although he was in business, he was never known to practise any of the usual tricks or deceptions of trade. He was a charitable, well-meaning man; but this interment of gold and precious stones was, in his opinion, a very silly waste of treasure: the ornaments could do no

good to a dead body, which could in no wise display them: they would never be missed; he and his family would be benefited by them, while no harm whatever could possibly come to any one by his appropriating them. He therefore determined, that on the night of the funeral he would enter the vault, open the coffin, and remove the jewels. The church was well situated for his purpose; it stood apart from the village to which it belonged, and was a solitary edifice in the midst of fields.

Behold him, then, in the darkness of the night, with his lantern at the lone church-door! He unlocks it, and passes in. He was at first rather awe-stricken by the dead stillness, the sudden heavy smell so different from the genial air without, and the vacant pews standing in deep shadow like melancholy and drear recesses. The nature of his office had given him a familiarity with the building, but had not

worn out of his mind the idea of its sacredness. It was an awful place to him now, for he was come on an unholy errand; he quaked to think that it should be the spot where he was to perpetrate the first deed in his life which he would be ashamed to own. As he went along the aisle with his lamp, the white tomb-stones on the walls glared, as it were, reproachfully upon him one by one;

The sculptured dead, on each side, seem'd to freeze,
Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails! *

His perturbation was increased by the dart of a bat close to his face; and, on looking round,

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* These lines are from "The Eve of St. Agnes," by the late John Keats; a production which, in the opinion of the present writer, is one of the most enchanting gems of literature—the abstracted essence of love, poetry, and romance.

he thought the pews were not quite empty; there seemed a pale congregation in the church. He knew this could only be fancy; and although he smiled it away, he was not altogether easy to think he should be subject to such visions. He almost regretted he had come, but he went on nevertheless, and passed into the lady's sepulchre.

Having laid down his lamp upon a coffin close by, he proceeded with his instruments to take off the lid of the one he sought, which was soon effected. This was the first moment of real irresolution and terror. The sight of the corpse, lying there by that dim light in the heavy stillness of death, with its white and placid countenance, made his heart swell and his nerves powerless. The sublimity of the sight made him feel the meanness of his action with double force: he almost fainted; and, with the intention of abandoning the business, he re-

turned into the body of the church. There he supported himself for a time while the coolness of the air refreshed him, and he was at length about to depart, when recollecting that the lid of the coffin should be replaced, he summoned a strong effort, and went again into the vault for that purpose.

But the consternation had done its utmost. The sight of the corpse was not now so awful to him as before. There was an imperceptible return of the original intention in his mind, and by a quick effort he lifted the body, drew the chain over the head, disengaged the locket from under the hand, and then lowered the corpse again into its place. As he did this, the arm, which before lay upon the breast, fell with a strange flexibility over the side of the coffin, and a faint sigh came from the body.

Had a thunderclap broken in upon the silence, the man would not have been more

staggered than he was at this little sigh. He rushed hastily forth, left the sepulchre unclosed, and opened the church-door to go out; when, as if to increase his bewilderment, the first thing which met his eyes was the great moon lifting itself in the unabated power of its light over the horizon's edge. It shone right opposite, and seemed looking at and coming to expose him. He did not dare to lift his eyes again; but, without stopping even to lock up the church, he flew over the fields, pursued by his fears.

It was at this time about eleven o'clock. The domestics at Woodley Hall had not yet retired to rest. Their minds were agitated and unsettled by the funeral; and they found relief in sitting up together, and talking over the circumstances connected with their lady's illness and sudden death. With hearts so full, they could not endure the silence of their

chambers, and it would have been vain to try to sleep: therefore, about the time I have just mentioned, they left their room and dull candles, to go out under the portico of the house, and enjoy the balmy night air and the bright moon.

The subject of their talk continued the same:—the youth of their lady, her gentleness, her unaccountable illness, the sublime testimony she gave of her love even in the grasp of death; and then of what would become of their heart-broken master, who had been secluded in his room all day, scarcely admitting any one even to bring him needful refreshment,—when one of them with a low voice said: "What can that white thing be which is fluttering about the beech-trees there, at the farthest end of the long walk?" They looked, and nothing was seen. It was, however, only leaf-hidden for a time; for presently

it emerged altogether from the obscurity of the trees, and they saw it plainly enough.

The walk was about a quarter of a mile in length. The object advanced down it, and soon a fearful sight was seen by the company under the portico; an apparently human figure with long trailing white garments, staggering and stumbling across the open park at that solemn hour, and under the keen moonlight.

They did not stop to see any more; but, hastening to their master's room, told him what they had witnessed.

He answered them with his faint voice from within:

"Go to rest, my friends; go to rest. Your minds are disturbed; and, to tell you the truth, my own is too much subdued just now to bear the hearing of such things. Shut up the house: good-night."

But they all persisted so strenuously in avouching the truth of what they had stated, that Sir William came from his chamber, and said he would go with them into the park, and see whether the apparition was yet visible. Poor man! he was at this time ill calculated to dissipate the terror which had taken hold of his servants. Sorrow, want of food, long privation of sleep, the dismal business of the day, and then this phantom-story, had almost bewildered his faculties, and he descended the stairs trembling and uncollected.

Before they had reached the bottom, one of the servants cried out with a wild voice, "Look, Sir—look!"

Sir William cast his eyes downwards, and, lo! there—upon the cold stone-floor of the hall—lay a figure entangled in unseemly clothes, moaning and sobbing naturally. The face was partially exposed. Sir William saw

it. His faculties seemed suddenly scattered, for in a confused manner he dropped on his knees by the side of the figure, and there remained a few moments with clasped hands and vacant and immoveable looks. At length a weak faltering female voice was heard :—

"I am afraid I have done wrong," it said, "but I must have been in a dream; do not be angry with me."

"God! God! my wife!" exclaimed the forlorn man: "How is this? No, no, no; it cannot be! *She* is in her tomb!—And yet this countenance and these grave-clothes strike away my senses with wonder!—Eliza! Eliza! She cannot speak again. Yet she is not quite cold. What can this mysterious visitation mean? Eliza! Let me once more hear that voice.—Silent! silent!—Lift her up. Look! it is herself, her own self; her lips move; and see, her poor face is wet with tears. God

alone knows how this has come to pass; but I will thank him for it for ever. There—gently, move her gently; lay her in my arms, and some one go before me with a light."

It was indeed his wife whom he embraced. He carried her to his chamber, laid her in the bed, and ordered warm restoratives to be prepared. These he administered himself, and she slept for two hours. On awaking she said:—

"Are you there, my dear? let me hear you speak. Something strange has happened to me, I am sure. Have I been delirious? I wish they had watched me better; for I am certain that I have been wandering out in the open air. It terrifies me to think of it. The dream I have had since I saw you, dear husband, last night, presses on me with an intolerable sense of reality. It must have been

those ghastly visions which scared me out of the house in my sleep. I am full of pain. My feet are sore and bleeding.—Reach me your hand, and comfort me with your voice.—I fancied that I was just now staying obstinately, and yet unwillingly, in a painful, dreary, dark place, and was startled there by a sudden rush of cold wind. I seemed to fall many times, and to bruise myself exceedingly in endeavouring to struggle out towards the light. This *must* have been a dream; but I am certain I have been wandering out of doors in my sleep, for I thought I should have gone mad when my perceptions came to me and I found myself alone, barefooted, and the wide and silent park stretching far around me. And tell me, why do you look so wretched and disconsolate? and why do the servants weep so? I thought they were in black when I

came in; but my eyes were weak, and deceived me. I have endeavoured, but it is in vain, to recollect any circumstance connected with my leaving the house."

Her husband shook from head to foot at this. The coffin and the hearse swam instantly in his eyes. He was sick at heart with the oppression of a mystery; but he looked at his wife again, and blessed heaven.

Having addressed a few cheering words to her, and promised not to leave her side, he exhorted her to be composed, and to endeavour to sleep.

In the morning the whole thing was explained. Some rustics, passing by the church, had observed it to be open; and, going in, saw that one of the family vaults was unclosed, and that there was an empty coffin in it. This information they carried forthwith to the

sexton, who, alarmed at the probability of being detected (as some one might have seen him escaping by the moonlight), and fearing that his guilt would seem greater than it was, went to Woodley Hall, and confessed the whole business, making a restitution of the locket, but declaring that he knew nothing whatever of the removal of the corpse.

He was readily enough forgiven, and, I believe, rewarded. It was plain now that Lady Fanshaw had been buried in a trance. It was of the utmost consequence that the subject of the interment should be kept from her knowledge. The sexton was enjoined to silence; but it was not so easy to quell the tongues of the village. Besides, when the lady recovered sufficiently to go out, every object she saw in the direction of the church perplexed her with some dim and uncomfortable reminiscence.

She might some day stumble on the truth; and Sir William, in the fear of this, sold his estate, and purchased another in a distant part of the country. In this latter place Lady Fanshaw gave birth to a large family, and lived many years with her husband in health and comfort.

THE JILT.

THE JILT.

Lo, here the guerdon that these lovers have!

CHAUCER.

"BRAVO! this is a glorious morning indeed. I will be a thorough Cockney to-day, in spite of all the railers, that's certain; for I'll *cut* the town this moment (five o'clock in the morning), and, after breakfasting in some pleasant village or half-village on the borders, strike off into the green interior of the county, and dine at a way-side inn, upon extempore mutton-chops and a gooseberry pie, with, mayhap, a glass of punch and a segar afterwards, to reward my virtue and set me a-dreaming

The worst of it is, that I shall have no company in my ramble. There will be no use in rousing up Fairfax, as I used to do on a fine holiday, for he is so warm in the pursuit of that love-affair of his, that there is no finding him with a leisure hour, much less a leisure day; and yet he is as idle, abstracted, and moody withal, as if he wanted occupation. Well, never mind. I wish him well through it, though I am not of his faction. I have not yet arrived at what they call the poetry of love. My amours go no deeper into the mystery than 'a bottle and kind landlady,' as the old song says; and, 'fore Gad, I'll have both to-day. Let me see: Fairfax's courtship is carried on somewhere about Willesden, and I don't care if I wander that way and encounter him and his mistress. I shall like to see how that serious face of his

will look with so light a thing as a fashionable girl hanging at his arm."

This, kind reader, was my soliloquy a short time ago, as I jumped out of bed with a presentiment of a fine day, opened the windows of my apartment in Ludgate Hill, and looked out on the cathedral of St. Paul, standing against the horizontal morning sun. There is a peculiar effect, and a very fine one too, owing of course to the nature of the atmosphere, in the early sunlight over a populous city. The beams look misty, crowded, almost passionate; they seem to sympathize with the place over which they are shining; they have nothing of the tranquil breadth of their rise in the country, but keep up a kind of golden vibration in the air, which is answered on the ground by the shifting shadows, large and minute, of the multiform objects of the streets; and on this morning they were magnificent indeed, beat-

ing against the great dome in a triumphant ferment.

I was soon up and dressed, and on my road, in a north-westerly direction; for not only had I determined, with reference to Fairfax, to go that way, but, unlike my brother citizens, I prefer it to either the east, the south, or the direct north. The part of town you pass through,—Grosvenor, Portman, and Bryanston Squares, with their central gardens, and tributary streets full of mansions rich in all the luxuries and refinements of art; each house, inasmuch as it is stored with produce from almost every part of the globe, being in itself a little universe;—these make a better foreground to the adjoining landscape, than the wharfs, counting-houses, and poverty-stricken streets which you pass in the other directions. The south (I speak under favour), is merely abominable. There is a capital description,

in a novel called "Sir Gilbert Easterling," of Lambeth (including St. George's Fields) before it was built upon; and a dreary place it seems to have been—level, bare, and marshy. It is worse now that it is inhabited. A book was published some little time ago, called "Sketches of St. George's Fields," and it had for its motto,

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

This, however, referred exclusively to the King's Bench prison, which ornaments the neighbourhood; but it would do for the whole region, than which nothing can be more forlorn. Dwarf and dilapidated houses in great dusty spaces; long rows of buildings afflicted with epilepsy, edging a noisy road, and pretending to have gardens, in which a few sad plants languish and starve; concealed courts, where the tenements, in their wretchedness,

seem to have lost all mutual good faith, and lean away from each other; while from their opposite sides the air-bereaved dwellers may shake hands in condolence, and yet not leave their respective parlours. Imagine all this, with here and there, to complete the effect, a few slimy ditches full-gorged and sleepy, and you have a pretty faithful idea of the present landscape of St. George's Fields.

The contrary of this is to be found in the north-west of London, to say nothing of the fine union of stateliness and rural beauty constituting Marylebone Park; and when you issue out into the Edgware Road a little beyond Paddington, nothing can well be lovelier, more retired, verdant, umbrageous,—I had almost said primeval; for the enormous town has not spread its encroachments much in this quarter; and it is an advantageous thing to the stroller in the quiet meadows hereabouts,

that all view of London, all notion of its propinquity, is entirely excluded. London, with its towers and temples, its endless maze of buildings, and inconceivable power and wealth, is a magnificent object from a distance—it cannot fail to be so; but to one accustomed to be buried within its swarthy walls, it is pleasant sometimes to get entirely rid of its associations. I, for one, am glad the metropolis is not situated in what is called a "romantic country." Hills, bare rocks, precipitous glens, wild woods, and torrents, are very fine things for occasional contemplation; but how much better, for familiar enjoyment, are fresh and homely meadows; smooth paths for indolent musing; fertile corn-fields spotted with the red and drowsy poppy; gentle uplands, not hills; sunny pastures, with cattle grazing here and there, or couched under the shadow of the hedge-row elms; a farm-house

"habundant of vitaille," as glorious old Chaucer says,—and a buxom dairy-maid.

These, dairy-maid included, are to be met with in the sequestered lane leading from Kilburn to Willesden; at which latter place I soon arrived. I had not been ten minutes in the parlour of the little inn which stands near the church-yard, when a post-chaise drove to the door—and who should alight but my friend? He did not enter the house, but paid the driver, and walked on. I abstained from speaking to him, for I was unwilling to place the slightest restraint on his movements; our intimacy being such, that I feared he might have felt under a necessity either to offer to join me in my day's ramble, or to explain what his own peculiar engagements were: I therefore kept out of his sight.

Poor Fairfax! he was not fit for earth. I do not say this with a design to exalt the qua-

lities of his mind as of a superior order of intelligence: a better creature, with a purer soul, never breathed; but it was a deficiency in him that he was too unsuspecting; for, contrary to the general *romance-idea* of a hero, I am of opinion that, instead of being unfit for contact with the vicious and designing part of mankind, the perfectest intellects are precisely those which are best adapted for this sort of warfare. Vice preys on weakness. Wise minds know how to encounter, and expose to irresistible contempt, the sordid malice which, like an evil spirit, haunts the souls of so many.

Fairfax lived in an ideal world; he was addicted to reverie, and the faint enjoyments of the imagination; he doted on pictures and music, and read no books but those of the poets, which indeed were scarcely ever out of his hands. He thought their dreams were

oracles fit to guide him through the world. He saw and estimated the hard realities of life through a beautiful, but a treacherous and fatal veil. He could not discern the miserable characters who were hungering to catch his easy disposition at fault, and crush him with their calumnies. There are so many ways by which a man may become acquainted with the unhappy meanness existing in part of the mass of mankind, that he must be perversely blind who is not aware of it, and does not provide against its agency, which is ready to perpetrate actions of the greatest cruelty from motives the most paltry and groveling.

Even his friends the poets (the two greatest of them, Chaucer and Shakspeare, especially) could have taught this saving knowledge to Fairfax; but he closed his perceptions against their bitter truths and warnings, and sought

only for what he called their *poetry;* such as the enchanting graces of their sentiment, their lofty passion, ethereal abstractions, and descriptions of nature. My poor friend had invested the passion of love, in particular, with calm and celestial attributes: it was the perfection of life, the foretaste of beatitude. He expected to realize the delicious dream of courtship by the poet:

> Then come those full confidings of the past,
> All sun-shine now where all was overcast;
> Then do they wander till the day is gone,
> Lost in each other; and, when night steals on,
> Covering them round, how sweet her accents are!
> Oh, when she turns and speaks, her voice is far,
> Far above singing! But soon nothing stirs
> To break the silence. Joy like his, like hers,
> Deals not in words; and now the shadows close,
> Now in the glimmering, dying light, she grows
> Less and less earthly! As departs the day,
> All that was mortal seems to melt away;

> Till, like a gift resumed as soon as given,
> She fades at last into a spirit from heaven! *

Alas! when my friend attached himself to Miss Hickson, he little thought on what a vulgar and fashionable thing his enthusiasm would be wrecked.

After taking a hearty luncheon at the "*Ring of Bells*," I started again, resolved to walk a few more miles to dinner; for, for this day only, I became restless among human beings, and longed to be in the fields alone. The fact is, I had a touch of the blue devils, which excessively puzzled me to account for. I have borne all sorts of rubs in my time, (some of them sweetly devised with elaborate ingenuity by *friends*,) and except in one instance when the great robber, Death, came to my house, my spirits never left me for more than five

* Rogers's "Human Life."

minutes at a time; yet now, in my favourite pastime of rambling, I felt on the sudden depressed. The king in "Tom Thumb," upon experiencing a similar feeling, was uncertain whether he ought to have referred it to "love, or the wind-colic;" and, in like manner, I could not determine if the sight of Fairfax, going, as I feared, headlong into some heartless snare, had made me nervous; or that I had in my luncheon eaten too much cheese, which is apt to disagree with me. The most eloquent and interesting of sorrows may, in nine cases out of ten, be traced to a weight, not on the mind, but on the stomach; and a little medicine shall have more effect than the profoundest casuistry. May not malignity itself be often cured in this way? It would, at any rate, be worth while to consider how far the Materia Medica ought to be consulted in moral legislation. Poor human nature might

be relieved from part of the stigma which rests on it, if the origin of evil-doings, which has given birth to such metaphysical, but hitherto vain enquiry, could at last be found in the diaphragm. We might then be able to unriddle actions which have defeated every attempt to account for their wanton mischief. How pleasant to be able to say of such things, "Well! it seemed malicious enough; but after all, it was no more than the effect of something not exactly right in the midriff."

Having amused myself awhile with the elegiac poetry on the tomb-stones in the church-yard, I turned into that little lane on the farther side; and stopping to admire the seclusion of a pretty low-built villa, standing in the middle of a garden, seen through a vista of taper trees, I perceived, on the sudden, a lady and gentleman coming towards me. I was about to retire, when I heard some one

call me by name; and looking again, I saw that the summoner was Fairfax. He immediately introduced me to his companion, who, with a great deal of ease and exterior elegance, invited me to walk in; and her father and brother coming up, I was prevailed on, by their united importunities, to stay and dine with them. I saw it would have given pain to Fairfax, had I refused the invitation.

At dinner the lady "shewed off," as the phrase is. Her dress was costly, and in due allegiance with the very last mode. She prated affectedly about botany, chemistry, and Rossini's music; and produced a portfolio of coloured drawings by herself. The talk was all her own. There was no necessity for any one else to say a word. Those of the party who perceived her utter want of understanding, did not think it worth while to correct the opinions she advanced; while her super-

abundant fluency silenced the more believing. Fairfax scarcely uttered a syllable during the whole of my stay. I fear he belonged (nay, he *must* have done so) to the former class; but once enthralled by the fascination of so beautiful a creature as Isabella Hickson, and farewell reason and judgment. She was, rather tall and slender, *not thin,* if the reader understands the difference; and once to see her walk, were to be out of doubt about the completeness of her symmetry in general. An imperfect figure may *sit* and pass muster; there can be no deception in walking; and Miss Hickson neglected nothing of personal discipline to set off her natural graces. She had a very piquant method of dressing her hair, and carrying her head; but, alas! with all these charms, her voice was a bitter one—thin and harsh; and though it was at war with the harmony of her person, it illustrated her

mind. Her family were merely people who moved, and breathed, and thought, according to the fashion. It would puzzle one to describe them in any other way. How could Fairfax, of all men, get into such a connexion? It was his property, no doubt, which tempted them to cultivate his acquaintance; for though the Hicksons lived in a shewy style, they were in reality needy.

I was not sorry when the time arrived for our departure. In our way home, Fairfax, after many indirect endeavours to bring about the conversation, said, "Well, Franklin, what think you of Miss Hickson? You have, no doubt, guessed the footing on which I visit her. She will, in a few weeks, be mine; our marriage is settled. You do not congratulate me, but are silent. I conjecture what is passing in your mind. You think we are not suited to each other in disposition and pur-

suits. I grant there is much of fashionable levity about her; but what young girl is free from it? And with regard to the superficial nature of her acquirements, it will be my pleasant task, after our union, to inform her mind anew, and accommodate her taste to mine. Her temper, I am convinced, is tractable; and then her beauty is perfect and divine!"

I do not like to give my opinion in matters of this sort. Nothing can be more vain or impertinent than to do so; for even if a man should ask your advice upon such a subject, he will generally be found to have made up his mind not to take it, unless it agrees in every respect with his own desire. I therefore contented myself with a general observation or two; and Fairfax, perceiving my disinclination to the subject, became taciturn, and parted from me rather sulkily.

One night, about a month after this, while

taking my evening glass, I was startled by a knock at the door,—rather an unusual thing at so late an hour. It was Fairfax. He came into my room with a dejected air, and seemed labouring under some oppression at his heart. I gave him a chair, and placed wine before him, leaving it to himself (for I knew his humour) to disburden his mind, just as the impulse might seize him. He remained embarrassed and silent full half an hour, and then said in a low voice:—

"I am very unhappy, my friend: Isabella has trifled with me. I told you a few weeks ago that we were to be married. The arrangements to that effect were concluded—at least, I thought so; for I have actually bought a house, and furnished it more after her taste than my own, wishing that her future residence should be, in every respect, conformable to her notions of fashionable style. She

knew of this; nay, she has been consulted in it: and she knew, moreover, that my heart and soul were in her keeping,—that she was the absolute ruler of my destiny. Since I first became acquainted with her, I have not, so help me Heaven! had a thought, a wish, or even a vague rumination, which did not tend to her. She was the final object of all; and stood, like a precious statue of enchantment, full in my view, at the end of every vista of my hopes! Forgive this emotion, Franklin: I meant, when I came to you, to speak of my misfortune soberly, like a man—not to be rhapsodical; but, alas! I am the slave of my feelings."

He paused awhile. I soothed his agitation as well as I could, and said to him, "Come, Fairfax, you shall talk no more of this now. Call on me in the morning; and if you think my counsel can give you ease, we will then discuss the matter fully. To-night we will

crack a bottle together, and call up remembrances of some of our old exploits. Fill your glass."

"I cannot speak, or think," he replied, "of any thing but my loss. Bear with me, while I tell you fully of all which tortures me.—For the last week or two I have perceived a great alteration in the manner of Miss Hickson towards me, which at first gave me some uneasiness. Upon consideration, I attributed it to nothing more than thoughtfulness and modest reserve—natural enough, as I imagined, to a woman upon the near approach of so important a change in her condition. The day before yesterday I called on Isabella, and found her sitting on the sofa with a gentleman, who was introduced to me by the name of Major Haggerstone. To this person all her talk, as well as the attentions of her family, were directed: on him she lavished the store of her pernicious blandishments. He was a

gay, dashing fellow, and seemed familiar enough with all the topics of the day; such as the horse-races, prize-fights, elopements, crim.-con. trials, and reported changes in the ministry. I saw that the whole family regarded him as a wit and a man of solid information, and that they began to look on me as a mere cypher. This chagrined me, and I came away much before my usual hour. In one thing, however, they have had feeling enough to consider me: they have not allowed me to be tortured long in doubt; for this morning," continued he, throwing a letter on the table, "I received that precise, cold, heartless, cursed note. Read it, Franklin."

I took the letter up. It was as follows:—

Willesden, Friday.

Dear Sir,

We are at a loss to conjecture what could have occasioned your constraint of man-

ner and abrupt departure, when you last visited us. My sister thinks you were offended with *her*, and that the presence of Major Haggerstone was the cause. She has drawn an omen from your captiousness in this matter, which is not in unison with her prospect of happiness with you. She thinks it will be better for you, as well as for herself, to deliberate farther before any irretrievable step be taken; for if it be your wish to estrange her from society, she is certain that marriage will be followed only by discontent and disputes.

I remain, dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

JOSEPH HICKSON.

Edw. Fairfax, Esq.

"Well, Fairfax," said I, "this fellow is plain-spoken enough, at any rate. I did not like to open *my* mind to you on this business before, because I saw you were enthralled be-

yond redemption; but now I may tell you that these are evidently a sordid set of people. The girl, in particular, is a frigid, calculating, vulgar flirt; the most unfit in the world for you, Fairfax, who, if I may say so to your face, are too much compounded of sentiment. The fact is, (you may depend on it,) that they have found a better customer for the girl,— I mean a richer; for that is the whole end and aim of their contrivances. I congratulate you, from the bottom of my heart, that you are disentangled."

"You have guessed rightly," he replied, "about their object. This Major is reported to have considerable wealth, and to be intimately connected in the upper circles: I have heard, moreover, by mere chance, that Isabella and he are to be married, and that the wedding-day is actually fixed. I shall not put the Hicksons to the awkward necessity of

being more explicit with me, for I do not intend to answer their letter, or trouble them any farther with my visits."

Having said this, he leaned his head down on the table, and seemed struggling with some strong agitation. I told him to be of good heart; that I applauded his spirit in not going any more to their house; that he was most fortunate in being saved from the curse of union with a frail and shallow toy. He admitted the reasonableness of what I said; but lifting up his face, which was bathed in tears, he exclaimed, "O, Franklin! it has cut me to the heart!"

"Why, Fairfax," said I, "this is the mere wantonness of sorrow. You know her character, and yet bewail her loss. Pluck up a better resolution. Take to yourself some of the Horatian philosophy, which you have latterly too much forgotten:—

"I can enjoy her while she's kind;
But when she dances in the wind,
And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
I puff the prostitute away."

These used to be favourite lines with you."

"Alas, alas!" he exclaimed, grasping my hand, and looking me hard in the face, "I loved her! Be she what she may, it was there where I had planted my affections. She has trampled them down, and I am ruined!"

I saw it would be of no use to oppose his sorrow. In fact, contrary to one's experience in these cases, Fairfax seemed to have been made worse, rather than better, by communicating his grief. He arose from his chair, and strode up and down the room in an agony.

It was now getting very late. I offered to go home with my friend; for, in his distracted condition, I did not like to send him out on a

solitary walk. He had chambers in Gray's Inn, and we accordingly proceeded up Holborn, when, upon passing a few steps beyond Gray's Inn Gate, and my reminding him that he had missed his accustomed turning, he said, "Not there—not there; I have left my chambers. I cannot put you to the trouble, at this hour, of going farther."

I persisted, however, in bearing him company, and we at length stopped at the door of a very smart-looking house in Montague Street, Marylebone, which, upon entering, I saw was newly furnished. Poor fellow! this, then, was the place where he had designed to enjoy his marriage happiness.

Fairfax took a light, and shewed me the parlours and drawing-rooms, which had evidently been fitted up at great expense; and upon my admiring their fashion and elegance, he seemed stricken on the sudden with a be-

wildered expression, (which gave me greater pain to witness than his more violent distraction in the early part of the evening,) and exclaimed, "It was all for her! Why has she abandoned me?"

In the morning (for I remained in the house all night) he seemed more composed; and I left him, after having made him promise to go into the country, and change the scene.

But I hasten to make an end of my story. It was on the very day in the week following the above, that I again took my favourite ramble to Willesden. The sun never shone on a finer morning. The air was warm and cloudless, and its luxury inspired me with happy thoughts. Great part of my apprehension for Fairfax had subsided, as I had every reason to believe he was with his friends in Somersetshire, and I placed great reliance on the salutary effects of new faces and new

scenes. On reaching the little village, I found it in a state of bustle and gaiety. The bells were ringing, chariots and post-chaises were moving about, and by the white favours and satin jackets of the postilions, it was plain some stylish wedding was going forward. I guessed who the parties were; and passing into the church-yard, I was just in time to see the bridal procession issue from the church, and proceed to Mr. Hickson's house. The distance was only a few yards, so that the company did not use their carriages; and I was able, unperceived, to see my poor friend's faithless mistress simpering along by the side of a dashing looking fellow, (her bridegroom,) in all the cold-blooded wantonness of her charms. In a short time the string of carriages and post-chaises were in requisition; and I understood it was the intention of the party to make a little excursion into

the country to dinner, and return to Hickson's villa in the evening. My serenity was not disturbed at sight of this heartless desertion of my friend, for I imagined he would very soon congratulate himself on escaping from so mercenary a connexion. And now, thought I to myself, as I was disappointed in my last visit of "taking mine ease at mine inn," I will this day enjoy my humour unconstrained; so I ordered my dinner, and with no other company than a volume of old Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, (could I have had better?) I spent a snug and happy day.

I know not how it came to pass, but this evening I staid at the "Ring of Bells" much later than usual. Indeed, the necessity of returning home never once occurred to me, till it was too late to think of doing so with safety. I therefore made my arrangements for the night, and resumed my book. About

ten o'clock the wedding cavalcade came back, amidst the shouts of the few inhabitants of that little hamlet.

The night was worthy of the day; sweet and clear, and visited by a bright moon. The trees were at rest; there was no breath of wind to agitate their heavy masses of leaves, which stood in magnificent stillness, screening the lower stars. The tranquillity was deep: it would have been dumb, only that the night-bird in the church-yard yews was warbling its thrilling notes over the dead.

The parlour where I sat looked out on part of Hickson's villa and grounds, which had a more beautiful appearance now than ever. Alas! the "clear pearl of heaven" is not influenced by place, but shines with the same tender and enchanting light upon the abode of worldly cunning, and the sacred hill of the Muses.

As I sat enjoying the soft hour, I heard a distant sound of coach-wheels; and as they came onwards, it seemed to me that the vehicles were three or four in number. Instead of turning round the road to the right, they stopped at the gate of the church-yard, which, as I think I have already mentioned, stands at the end of the village, close to my little inn. There was something strange in this circumstance, at such an hour; but as I am not fond of intruding myself on the affairs of other people, (and this, from the number of the coaches, was evidently not a clandestine proceeding,) I was contented in merely lifting up my window, and acquiring such knowledge as I might from the persons in the road. I listened, and for ten minutes all was still; but afterwards a murmur and stir became audible, as if something were going on in the church-yard. "Good God!" I exclaimed,

"the morning scene of a gay wedding is now occupied by the saddest and most solemn of all earthly things,—a midnight burial! This is always a public ceremony: I may be present at it without reproach: I will go and mourn with them."

Accordingly I unbolted the door, and went out. The moon had now set, and the night was gloomy; but I expected every instant, as I advanced, to see the customary light of torches in the place of burial. In this I was deceived; for, on reaching the gate where the coaches were drawn up, and looking in, I could distinguish nothing: all was very dark. Still the noise continued. I began to feel agitated by the mystery of the affair; and, resolving to unfathom it, I crossed the stile, and groped my way among the tomb-stones in the direction of the sound. I had scarcely crossed the church-yard, when I saw the

twinkle of a lantern, which seemed to be moving towards me. My eyes were fixed on it, and presently I ascertained that it lighted a party who were bearing some heavy burden. They came from the little lane into which Hickson's villa fronted. Upon their nearer approach, it was evident that they were carrying the body of a man. I lost all self-possession at this sight, and involuntarily cried out, "What are you doing there, villains? Put down the corpse."

"Nonsense!" retorted one of the men, who looked like a hackney-coachman. "Who are you? and what do you take us for? We a'n't resurrectioners; and this here a'n't no corpse. It 's only a poor gentleman who has lost his wits."

A dreadful suspicion came over me, as he said these words. My heart fainted: I

thought I should have dropped. I hesitated to realize my fears by looking at the man they were bearing, who, as it turned out, was indeed no other than poor Fairfax.

"I know this gentleman," said I to the men. "I have a room at the inn here close to the gate: take him there, and I will endeavour to obtain medical assistance."

At these words a person, whom I had not seen before, came forwards and said, "Thank you, thank you, Sir. What?" continued he, as he saw me more clearly, "is it not Mr. Franklin? Don't you know me? I am Mr. Fairfax's servant. O, Sir, I wish I could have found you to-day! I sent to your lodgings, but they knew not where you were. All this might have been prevented. My master has been raving all day."

"Well, well, George," I replied, "we must

act now, and not lament. Take your master to my room, while I seek for medical advice."

The apothecary of the place was soon found. He seemed an intelligent person, and took great interest in the case. Having administered an anodyne, he ordered the room to be kept perfectly quiet, and said he would himself sit by his patient the remainder of the night. Leaving Fairfax, therefore, under the care of this gentleman, I came down stairs, and heard the following account from my friend's servant:—

"My master," said he, "returned from Somersetshire yesterday. By some means or other, he had got intelligence that Miss Hickson's marriage was to be to-day. His melancholy all the morning has been distressing beyond every thing. About nine at night he grew quite wild, and mystified us all by ordering me to call four hackney-coaches! I did

not dare to thwart his humour. When they arrived at the door, he began to derange every thing in the house, and stowed the coaches with many valuable articles which fell in his way; such as cabinets, work-tables, pictures, glasses, books, and cases of jewels. He and I then got into one of the coaches, having ordered the others to follow us to Willesden. We passed along that lonely lane in utter silence; and I was once or twice afraid that the men would be suspicious about the strangeness of our proceeding, and refuse to go on. In this, however, I was wrong; for, as I have since found, they were very curious to know what we were "*after*," and this feeling would have carried them at least double the distance. On arriving at the gates of the church-yard, my master stopped the train; and alighting, he opened the first coach-door, and, without uttering a syllable, deliberately took from it a

splendid Buhl cabinet, with which he walked into the opposite lane, and threw it over the fence into Mr. Hickson's garden. Next came a lady's work-box; that also flew in the same direction; till by degrees, losing patience, he ran like a madman from coach to coach, strewing the ground with a diversity of articles, till he had emptied the coaches. He then took a pocket-book out, into which I had seen him, in the morning, put bank-notes, and pieces of paper which I think they call Exchequer-bills. This also flew over into the garden; and I shall never forget his looks as he bawled out, 'Take them! take them! It was for these things you sought me. There! there!' At length, exhausted with fatigue and anguish, he fell with his face to the earth, and lay as one dead. You know the rest."

Poor fellow! there was something grand, though fantastical, in the manner of his de-

spair. In the morning he was calmer, but obstinately silent. His reason seems alienated: I fear the worst.

* * * * * * * *

Half a year has elapsed since the above affair occurred. It is said that the marriage between Major Haggerstone and Isabella Hickson was a mutual deception. He was in desperate circumstances, and thought to retrieve them; and she expected a handsome provision, and a lift in society. They have of course detected each other, and are *separated*, if the Major's desertion of the girl can be allowed to go under that name.

Fairfax has had every advantage which skill and attention could furnish; but his malady seems settled. He is at present a quiet, inoffensive boarder in one of the private madhouses in the neighbourhood of London.

THE END.